

The Poor Scholar eBook

The Poor Scholar by William Carleton

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Page 1

THE POOR SCHOLAR.

One day about the middle of November, in the year 18—, Dominick M'Evoy and his son Jemmy were digging potatoes on the side of a hard, barren hill, called Esker Dhu. The day was bitter and wintry, the men were thinly clad, and as the keen blast swept across the hill with considerable violence, the sleet-like rain which it bore along pelted into their garments with pitiless severity. The father had advanced into more than middle age; and having held, at a rack-rent the miserable waste of farm which he occupied, he was compelled to exert himself in its cultivation, despite either obduracy of soil, or inclemency of weather. This day, however, was so unusually severe, that the old man began to feel incapable of continuing his toil. The son bore it better; but whenever a cold rush of stormy rain came over them, both were compelled to stand with their sides against it, and their heads turned, so as that the ear almost rested back upon the shoulder in order to throw the rain off their faces. Of each, however, that cheek which was exposed to the rain and storm was beaten into a red hue; whilst the other part of their faces was both pale and hunger-pinched.

The father paused to take breath, and, supported by his spade, looked down upon the sheltered inland which, inhabited chiefly by Protestants and Presbyterians, lay rich and warm-looking under him.

"Why, thin," he exclaimed to the son—a lad about fifteen,—“sure I know well I oughtn't to curse yez, anyway, you black set! an' yit, the Lord forgive me my sins, I'm almost ttempted to give yez a volley, an' that from my heart out! Look at thim, Jimmy agra—only look at the black thieves! how warm an' wealthy they sit there in our ould possessions, an' here we must toil till our fingers are worn to the stumps, upon this thievin' bent. The curse of Cromwell on it!—You might as well ax the divil for a blessin', as expect anything like a dacent crop out of it.—Look at thim two ridges!—such a poor sthring o' praties is in it!—one here an' one there—an' yit we must turn up the whole ridge for that same! Well, God sind the time soon, when the right will take place, Jimmy agra!”

“An' doesn't Pasthorini say it? Sure whin Twenty-five comes, we'll have our own agin: the right will overcome the might—the bottomless pit will be locked—ay, double: bouted, if St. Pettier gets the kays, for he's the very boy that will accommodate the heretics wid a warm corner; an' yit, faith, there's: many o' thim that myself 'ud put in a good word for, affcher all.”

“Throth, an' here's the same, Jimmy. There's Jack Stuart, an' if there's a cool corner in hell, the same Jack will get it—an' that he may, I pray Gor this day, an' amin. The Lord sind it to him! for he richly desarves it. Kind, neighborly, and frindly, is he an' all belongin' to him; an' I wouldn't be where a hard word 'ud be spoken of him, nor a dog in connection wid the family ill-treated; for which reason may he get a cool corner in hell, I humbly sufflicate.”

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“What do you think of Jack Taylor? Will he be cosey?”

“Throth, I doubt so—a blessed youth is Jack: yit myself ’ud hardly wish it. He’s a heerum-skeemm, divil-may-care fellow, no doubt of it, an’ laughs at the priests, which same I’m thinkin’ will get him below stairs more nor a new-milk heat, any way; but thin agin, he thrates thim dacent, an’ gives thim good dinners, an’ they take all this rolliken in good part, so that it’s likely he’s not in airnest in it, and surely they ought to know best, Jimmy.”

“What do you think of Yallow Sam?—honest Sam, that they say was born widout a heart, an’ carries the black wool in his ears, to keep out the cries of the widows an’ the orphans, that are long rotten in their graves through his dark villany!—He’ll get a snug birth!”*

* This was actually said of the person alluded to—a celebrated usurer and agent to two or three estates, who was a little deaf, and had his ears occasionally stuffed with black wool.

“Yallow Sam,” replied the old man, slowly, and a dark shade of intense hatred blackened his weather-beaten countenance, as he looked in the direction from which the storm blew: “’twas he left us where we’re standin’, Jimmy—undher this blast, that’s cowlther an’ bitterer nor a step-mother’s breath, this cuttin’ day! ’Twas he turned us on the wide world, whin your poor mother was risin’ out of her faver. ’Twas he squenched the hearth, whin she wasn’t able to lave the house, till I carried her in my arms into Paddy Cassidy’s—the tears fallin’ from my eyes upon her face, that I loved next to God. Didn’t he give our farm to his bastard son, a purple Orangeman? Out we went, to the winds an’ skies of heaven, bekase the rich bodagh made intherest aginst us. I tould him whin he chated me out o’ my fifteen goolden guineas, that his masther, the landlord, should hear of it; but I could never get next or near to him, to make my complaint. Eh? A snug birth! I’m only afeard that hell has no corner hot enough for him—but lave that to the divil himself: if he doesn’t give him the best thratment hell can afford, why I’m not here.”

“Divil a one o’ the ould boy’s so bad as they say, father; he gives it to thim hot an’ heavy, at all evints.”

“Why even if he was at a loss about Sam, depind upon it, he’d get a hint from his betthers above, that ’ud be sarviceable.”

“They say he visits him as it is, an’ that Sam can’t sleep widout some one in the room wid him. Dan Philips says the priest was there, an’ had a Mass in every room in the house; but Charley Mack tells me there’s no! thruth in it. He was advised to it, he says; but it seems the ould boy has too strong ahoulth of him, for Sam said he’d have the divil any time sooner nor the priest, and its likest what he would say.”



“Och, och, Jimmy, avick, I’m tir’d out! We had betther give in; the day’s too hard, an’ there’s no use in standin’ agin the weather that’s in it. Lave the ould villain to God, who he can’t chate, any way.”



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“Well, may our curse go along wid the rest upon him, for dhrivin’ us to sich an unnatural spot as this! Hot an’ heavy, into the sowl an’ marrow of him may it penetrate. An’ sure that’s no more than all the counthry’s wishin’ him, whether or not—not to mintion the curses that’s risin’ out o’ the grave agin him, loud an’ piercin’!”

“God knows it’s not slavin’ yourself on sich a day as this you’d be, only for him. Had we kep our farm, you’d be now well an in your larnin’ for a priest—an’ there ‘ud be one o’ the family sure to be a gintleman, anyhow; but that’s gone too, agra. Look at the smoke, how comfortable it rises from Jack Sullivan’s, where the priest has a Station to-day. ‘Tisn’t fishin’ for a sthray pratie he is, upon a ridge like this. But it can’t be helped; an’ God’s will be done! Not himself!—faix, it’s he that’ll get the height of good thratement, an’ can ride home, well lined, both inside an’ outside. Much good may it do him!—’tis but his right.”

The lad now paused in his turn, looked down on Jack Sullivan’s comfortable house, sheltered by a clump of trees, and certainly saw such a smoke tossed up from the chimney, as gave unequivocal evidence of preparation for a good dinner. He next looked “behind the wind,” with a visage made more blank and meagre by the contrast; after which he reflected for a few minutes, as if working up his mind to some sudden determination. The deliberation, however, was short; he struck his open hand upon the head of the spade with much animation, and instantly took it in both hands, exclaiming:

“Here, father, here goes; to the divil once an’ for ever I pitch slavery,” and as he spoke, the spade was sent as far from him as he had strength to throw it. “To the divil I pitch slavery! An’ now, father, wid the help o’ God, this is the last day’s work I’ll ever put my hand to. There’s no way of larnin’ Latin here; but off to Munster I’ll start, an’ my face you’ll never see in this parish, till I come home either a priest an a gintleman! But that’s not all, father dear; I’ll rise you out of your distress, or die in the struggle. I can’t bear to see your gray hairs in sorrow and poverty.”

“Well, Jimmy—well, agra—God enable you, avourneen; ’tis a good intintion. The divil a one o’ me will turn another spadeful aither, for this day: I’m *dhrookin’* (* dripping) wid the rain. We’ll go home an’ take an air o’ the fire we want it; and aftherwards we can talk about what you’re *on* (* determined) for.”

It is usual to attribute to the English and Scotch character, exclusively, a cool and persevering energy in the pursuit of such objects as inclination or interest may propose for attainment; whilst Irishmen are considered too much the creatures of impulse to reach a point that requires coolness, condensation of thought, and efforts successively repeated. This is a mistake. It is the opinion of Englishmen and Scotchmen who know not the Irish character thoroughly. The



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fact is, that in the attainment of an object, where a sad-faced Englishman would despair, an Irishman will, probably, laugh, drink, weep, and fight, during his progress to accomplish it. A Scotchman will miss it, perhaps, but, having done all that could be done, he will try another speculation. The Irishman may miss it too; but to console himself he will break the head of any man who may have impeded him in his efforts, as a proof that he ought to have succeeded; or if he cannot manage that point, he will crack the pate of the first man he meets, or he will get drunk, or he will marry a wife, or swear a gauger never to show his face in that quarter again; or he will exclaim, if it be concerning a farm, with a countenance full of simplicity—"God bless your honor, long life and honor to you, sir! Sure an' 'twas but a thrifle, anyhow, that your Reverence will make up for me another time. An' 'tis well I know your Lordship 'ud be the last man on airth to give me the cowld shoulder, so you would, an' I an ould residenthur on your own father's estate, the Lord be praised for that same! An' 'tis a happiness, an' nothjn' else, so it is, even if I payed double rint—wherein, maybe, I'm not a day's journey from that same, manin' the double rint, your honor; only that one would do a great deal for the honor an' glory of livin' undher a raal gintleman—an' that's but rason."

There is, in short, a far-sightedness in an Irishman which is not properly understood, because it is difficult to understand it. I do not think there is a nation on earth, whose inhabitants mix up their interest and their feelings together more happily, shrewdly, and yet less ostensibly, than Irishmen contrive to do. An Irishman will make you laugh at his joke, while the object of that joke is wrapped up from you in the profoundest mystery, and you will consequently make the concession to a certain point of his character, which has been really obtained by a faculty you had not penetration to discover, or, rather, which he had too much sagacity to exhibit. Of course, as soon as your back is turned, the broad grin is on him, and one of his cheeks is stuck out two inches beyond the other, because his tongue is in it at your stupidity, simplicity, or folly. Of all the national characters on this habitable globe, I verily believe that that of the Irish is the most profound and unfathomable; and the most difficult on which to form a system, either social, moral, or religious.

It would be difficult, for example, to produce a more signal instance of energy, system, and perseverance than that exhibited in Ireland during the struggle for Emancipation. Was there not flattery to the dust? blarney to the eyes? heads broken? throats cut? houses burned? and cattle houghed? And why? Was it for the mere pleasure of blarney—of breaking heads (I won't dispute the last point, though, because I scorn to give up the glory of the national character),—of cutting throats—burning houses—or houghing cattle? No; but to secure Emancipation. In attaining that object was exemplified that Irish method of gaining a point.



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“Yes,” said Jemmy, “to the divil I pitch slavery! I will come home able to rise yez from your poverty, or never show my face in the parish of Ballysogarth agin.”

When the lad’s determination was mentioned to his mother and the family, there was a loud and serious outcry against it: for no circumstance is relished that ever takes away a member from an Irish hearth, no matter what the nature of that circumstance may be.

“Och, thin, is it for that *bocaun* (* soft, innocent person) of a boy to set off wid himself, runnin’ through the wide world afther larnin’, widout money or friends! Avourneen, put it out of yer head. No; struggle on as the rest of us is doin’, an’ maybe yell come as well off at the long run.”

“Mother, dear,” said the son, “I wouldn’t wish to go agin what you’d say; but I made a promise to myself to ’rise yez out of your poverty if I can, an’ my mind’s made up on it; so don’t cross me, or be the manes of my havin’ bad luck on my journey, in regard of me goin’ aginst yer will, when you know ’twould be the last thing I wish to do.”

“Let the gossoon take his way, Vara. Who knows but it was the Almighty put the thoughts of it into his head. Pasthorini says that there will soon be a change, an’ ’tis a good skame it ’ill be to have him a *sogarth* when the fat living will be walkin’ back to their ould owners.”

“Oh, an’ may the Man above grant *that*, I pray Jamini this day! for are not we harrished out of our lives, scrapin’ an’ scramblin’ for the black thieves, what we ought to put on our backs, an’ into our own mouths. Well, they say it’s not lucky to take money from a priest, because it’s the price o’ sin, an’ no more it can, seein’ that they want it themselves; but I’m sure it’s *their* (* The Protestant clergy) money that ought to carry the bad luck to them, in regard of their gettin’ so many bitter curses along wid it.”

When a lad from the humblest classes resolves to go to Munster as a poor scholar, there is but one course to be pursued in preparing his outfit. This is by a collection at the chapel among the parishioners, to whom the matter is made known by the priest, from the altar some Sunday previous to his departure. Accordingly, when the family had all given their consent to Jemmy’s project, his father went, on the following day, to communicate the matter to the priest, and to solicit his co-operation in making a collection in behalf of the lad, on the next Sunday but one: for there is always a week’s notice given, and sometimes more, that the people come prepared.

The conversation already detailed between father and son took place on Friday, and on Saturday, a day on which the priest never holds a Station, and, of course, is generally at home, Dominick M’Evoy went to his house with the object already specified in view. The priest was at home; a truly benevolent man, but like the worthies of his day, not over-burdened with learning, though brimful of kindness and hospitality mixed up with drollery and simple cunning.



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“Good morning, Dominick!” said the priest, as Dominick entered.

“Good morrow, kindly, Sir,” replied Dominick: “I hope your Reverence is well, and in good health.”

“Troth I am, Dominick! I hope there’s nothing wrong at home; how is the wife and children?”

“I humbly, thank your Reverence for axin’! Troth there’s no rason for complainin’ in regard o’ the health; sarra one o’ them but’s bravely, consitherin’ all things: I believe I’m the worst o’ them, myself, yer Reverence.. I’m gettin’ ould, you see, an’ stiff’, an’ wake; but that’s only in the coorse o’ nathur; a man can’t last always. Wait till them that’s young an’ hearty now, harrows as much as I ploughed in my day, an’ they won’t have much to brag of. Why, thin, but yer Reverence stands it bravely—faix, wondherfully itself—the Lord be praised! an’ it warms my own heart to see you look so well.”

“Thank you, Dominick. Indeed, my health, God be thanked, is very good. Elish,” he added, calling to an old female servant—“you’ll take a glass, Dominick, the day is cowlidish—Elish, here take the kay, and get some spirits—the poteen, Elish—to the right hand in the cupboard. Indeed, my health is very good, Dominick. Father Murray says he invies me my appetite, an’ I tell him he’s guilty of one of the Seven deadly sins.”

“Ha, ha, ha!—Faix, an’ Invy is one o’ them sure enough; but a joke is a joke in the mane time. A pleasant gintleman is the same Father Murray, but yer Reverence is too deep for him in the jokin’ line, for all that. Ethen, Sir, but it’s you that gave ould Cokely the keen cut about his religion—ha, ha, ha! Myself laughed till I was sick for two days aafter it—the ould thief!”

“Eh?—Did you hear that, Dominick? Are you sure that’s the poteen, Elish? Ay, an’ the best of it all was, that his pathrun, Lord Foxhunter, was present. Come, Dominick, try that—it never seen wather. But the best of it all was—”

—“Well, Father Kavanagh,’ said he, ‘who put you into the church? Now,’ said he, ‘you’ll come over me wid your regular succession from St. Peter, but I won’t allow that.’

“Why, Mr. Cokely,’ says I, back to him, ‘I’ll giye up the succession;’ says I, ‘and what is more, I’ll grant that you have been called by the Lord, and that I have not; but the Lord that called you,’ says I, ‘was Lord Foxhunter.’ Man, you’d tie his Lordship wid a cobweb, he laughed so heartily.

“Bravo, Father Kavanagh,’ said he. ‘Cokely, you’re bale,’ said he; ‘and upon my honor you must both dine with me to-day, says he—and capital claret he keeps.”

“Your health, Father Kavanagh, an’ God spare you to us! Hah! wather! Oh, the divil a taste itself did the same stuff see! Why, thin, I think your Reverence an’ me’s about an



age. I bleeve. I'm a thrifle oulder; but I don't bear it so well as you do. The family, you see, an' the childhre, an' the cares o' the world, pull me down: throth, the same family's a throuble to me. I wish I had them all settled safe, any way."



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“What do you intend to do with them, Dominick?”

“In throth, that’s what brought me to yer Reverence. I’ve one boy—Jimmy—a smart chap entirely, an’ he has taken it into his head to go as a poor scholar to Munster. He’s fond o’ the larnin’, there’s not a doubt o’ that, an’ small blame to him to be sure; but then again, what can I do? He’s bint on goin’, an’ I’m not able to help him, poor fellow, in any shape; so I made bould to see yer Reverence about it, in hopes that you might be able to plan out something for him more bettther nor I could do. I have the good wishes of the neighbors, and indeed of the whole parish, let the thing go as it may.”

“I know that, Dominick, and for the same rason well have a collection at the three althars. I’ll mention it to them after Mass to-morrow, and let them be prepared for Sunday week, when we can make the collection. Hut, man, never fear; we’ll get as much as will send him half-way to the priesthood; and I’ll tell you what, Dominick, I’ll never be the man to refuse giving him a couple of guineas myself.”

“May the heavenly Father bless an’ keep your Reverence. I’m sure ’tis a good right the boy has, as well as all of us, to never forget your kindness. But as to the money—he’ll be proud of your assistance the other way, sir,—so not a penny—’tis only your good-will we want—hem—except indeed, that you’d wish yourself to make a piece of kindness of it to the poor boy. Oh, not a drop more, sir,—I declare it’ll be apt to get into my head. Well, well—sure an’ we’re not to disobey our clargy, whether or not: so here’s your health over agin, your Reverence! an’ success to the poor child that’s bint on good!”

“Two guineas his Reverence is to give you from himself, Jimmy,” said the father, on relating the success of this interview with the priest; “an’ faix I was widin one of refusin’ it, for feard it might bring something unlucky* wid it; but, thought I, on the spur, it’s best to take it, any way. We can asily put it off on some o’ these black-mouthed Presbyterians or Orangemen, by way of changin’ it, an’ if there’s any hard fortune in it, let them have the full benefit of it, *ershi misha*.” (** Say I.)

* There is a superstitious belief in some parts of Ireland, that priests’ money is unlucky; “because,” say the people, “it is the price of sin”—alluding to absolution.

It is by trifles of this nature that the unreasonable though enduring hatred with which the religious sects of Ireland look upon those of a different creed is best known. This feeling, however, is sufficiently mutual. Yet on both sides there is something more speculative than practical in its nature. When they speak of each other as a distinct class, the animosity, though abstracted, appears to be most deep; but when they mingle in the necessary intercourse of life, it is curious to see them frequently descend, on both sides, from the general rule to those exceptions of good-will and kindness, which natural benevolence and mutual obligation, together with a correct knowledge of each other’s real characters, frequently produce. Even this abstracted hatred, however, has been

the curse of our unhappy country; it has kept us too much asunder, or when we met exhibited us to each other in our darkest and most offensive aspects.

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Dominick's conduct in the matter of the priest's money was also a happy illustration of that mixture of simplicity and shrewdness with which an Irishman can frequently make points meet, which superstition, alone, without such ingenuity, would keep separate for ever. Many another man might have refused the money from an ignorant dread of its proving unlucky; but his mode of reasoning on the subject was satisfactory to himself, and certainly the most ingenious which, according to his belief, he could have adopted—that of foisting it upon a heretic.

The eloquence of a country priest, though rude, and by no means elevated, is sometimes well adapted to the end in view, to the feelings of his auditory, and to the nature of the subject on which he speaks. Pathos and humor are the two levers by which the Irish character is raised or depressed; and these are blended, in a manner too anomalous to be ever properly described. Whoever could be present at a sermon on the Sunday when a Purgatorian Society is to be established, would hear pathos and see grief of the first water. It is then he would get a "nate" and glowing description of Purgatory, and see the broad, humorous, Milesian faces, of three or four thousand persons, of both sexes, shaped into an expression of the most grotesque and clamorous grief. The priest, however, on particular occasions of this nature, very shrewdly gives notice of the sermon, and of the purpose for which it is to be preached:—if it be grave, the people are prepared to cry; but if it be for a political, or any other purpose not decidedly religious, there will be abundance of that rough, blunt satire and mirth, so keenly relished by the peasantry, illustrated, too, by the most comical and ridiculous allusions. That priest, indeed, who is the best master of this latter faculty, is uniformly the greatest favorite. It is no unfrequent thing to see the majority of an Irish congregation drowned in sorrow and tears, even when they are utterly ignorant of the language spoken; particularly in those districts where the Irish is still the vernacular tongue. This is what renders notice of the sermon and its purport necessary; otherwise the honest people might be seriously at a loss whether to laugh or cry.

"Elliih avourneen, gho dhe dirsha?"—"Elish, my dear, what is he saying?"

"Och, musha niel eshighum, ahagur—ta sha er Purgathor, ta barlhum."—"Och, I dunna that, jewel; I believe he's on Purgatory."

"Och, och, oh—och, och, oh—oh, i, oh, i, oh!"

And on understanding that Purgatory is the subject, they commence their grief with a rocking motion, wringing their hands, and unconsciously passing their beads through their fingers, whilst their bodies are bent forward towards the earth.

On the contrary, when the priest gets jocular—which I should have premised, he never does in what is announced as a solemn sermon—you might observe several faces charged with mirth and laughter, turned, even while beaming with this expression, to those who kneel beside them, inquiring:

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“Arrah, Barny, what is it—ha, ha, ha!—what is it he’s sayin’? The Lord spare him among us, anyhow, the darlin’ of a man! Eh, Barny, you that’s in the inside the English?” This, of course is spoken in Irish.

Barny, however, is generally too much absorbed in the fun to become interpreter just then; but as soon as the joke is nearly heard out, in compliance with the importunity of his neighbors, he gives them a brief hint or two, and instantly the full chorus is rung out, long, loud, and jocular.

On the Sunday in question, as the subject could not be called strictly religious, the priest, who knew that a joke or two would bring in many an additional crown to Jemmy’s *caubeen*,* was determined that they, should at least have a laugh for their money. The man, besides, was benevolent, and knew the way to the Irish heart; a knowledge which he felt happy in turning to the benefit of the lad in question.

* Such collections were generally made in hats—the usual name for an Irish peasant’s hat being—*caubeen*.

With this object in view, he addressed the people somewhat in the following language: “*Blessed is he that giveth his money to him that standeth in need of it.*”

“These words, my brethren, are taken from St. Paul, who, among ourselves, knew the value of a friend in distress as well as any other apostle in the three kingdoms—hem. It’s a nate text, my friends, anyhow. He manes, however, when we have it to give, my own true, well-ried, ould friends!—when we have it to give. It’s absence althers the case, in toto; because you have all heard the proverb—‘there is no takin’ money out of an empty purse:’ or, as an ould ancient author said long ago upon the same subject:

‘Cantabit whaekuus coram lathrone whiathur!’

—(Dshk, dshk, dshk*—that’s the larnin’!)—He that carries an empty purse may fwhistle at the thief. It’s *sing* in the Latin; but sing or fwhistle, in my opinion, he that goes wid an empty purse seldom sings or fwhistl’es to a pleasant tune. Melancholy music I’d call it, an’ wouldn’t, may be, be much asthray al’ther—Hem. At all evints, may none of this present congregation, whin at their devotions, ever sing or fwhistle to the same time! No; let it be to ‘money in both pockets,’ if you sing at all; and as long as you have that, never fear but you’ll also have the ‘priest in his boots’ into the bargain—(“Ha, ha, ha!—God bless him, isn’t he the pleasant gentleman, all out—ha, ha, ha!—moreover, an’ by the same a token, it’s throe as Gospel, so it is,”)—for well I know you’re the high-spirited people, who wouldn’t see your priest without them, while a fat parson, with half-a-dozen chins upon him, red and rosy, goes about every day in the week bogged in boots, like a horse-trooper!—(“Ha, ha, ha!—good, Father Dan! More power to you—ha, ha, ha! We’re the boys that wouldn’t see you in want o’ them, sure enough. Isn’t he the droll crathur?”)



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* This sound, which expresses wonder, is produced by striking the tip of the tongue against the palate.

“But suppose a man hasn’t money, what is he to do? Now this divides itself into what is called Hydrostatics an’ Metaphuysics, and must be proved logically in the following manner:

“First, we suppose him not to have the money—there I may be wrong or I may be right; now for the illustration and the logic.

“Pether Donovan.”

“Here, your Reverence.”

“Now, Pether, if I suppose you to have no money, am I right, or am I wrong?”

“Why, thin, I’d be sarry to prove your Reverence to be wrong, so I would; but, for all that, I believe I must give it against you.”

“How much have you got, Pether?”

“Ethen, but ‘tis your Reverence that’s comin’ close upon me; two or three small note an’ some silver.”

“How much silver, Pether?”

“I’ll tell your Reverence in a jiffy—I ought to have a ten shillin’, barring the price of a quarther o’ tobaccy that I bought at the crass-roads boyant. Nine shillins an’ some hapuns, yer Reverence.”

“Very good, Pether, you must hand me the silver, till I give the rest of the illustration wid it.”

“But does your Reverence mind another ould proverb?—‘a fool an’ his money’s asy parted.’ Sure an’ I know you’re goin’ to do a joke upon me.”

(“Give him the money, Pether,” from a hundred voices—“give his Reverence the money, you nager you—give him the silver, you dirty spalpeen you—hand it out, you misert.”)

“Pether, if you don’t give it dacently, I’ll not take it; and in that case—”

“Here, here, your Reverence—here it is; sure I wouldn’t have your ill-will for all I’m worth.”



“Why, you nager, if I wasn’t the first orator livin’, barrin’ Cicero or Demosthenes himself, I couldn’t schrew a penny out o’ you! Now, Pether, there’s a specimen of logic for you; an’ if it wasn’t good, depend upon it the money would be in your pocket still. I’ve never known you to give a penny for any charitable purpose, since ever I saw your face: but I’m doin’ a good action in your behalf for once; so if you have any movin’ words to say to the money in question, say them, for you’ll never finger it more.”

A burst of the most uproarious mirth followed this manoeuvre, in which the simple priest himself joined heartily; whilst the melancholy of Peter’s face was ludicrously contrasted with the glee which characterized those who surrounded him.

“Hem!—Secondly—A man, you see, may have money, or he may not, when his fellow creature who stands in need of it makes an appeal to his decency and his feelings; and sorry I’d be to think that there’s a man before me, or a woman either, who’d refuse to assist the distresses of any one, of any creed, church, or persuasion, whether white, black, or yellow—no; I don’t except even the blue-bellies themselves. It’s



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what I never taught you, nor never will tache you to the day of my death! To be sure, a fellow-creature may say, 'Help me, my brother, I am distressed,' or, 'I am bent on a good purpose, that your kindness can enable me to accomplish.' But suppose that you have not the money about you at the time, wouldn't you feel sorry to the back-bone? Ay, would yez—to the very core of the heart itself. Or if any man—an' he'd be' nothing else than a bodagh that would say it—if any man would tell me that you would not, I'd—yes—I'd give him his answer, as good as I gave to ould Cokely long ago, and you all know what that was.

"The next point is, what would you do if you hadn't it about you? It's that can tell you what you'd do—you'd say, 'I haven't got it, brother,'—for ev'ry created bein' of the human kind is your brother, barrin' the women, an' they are your sisters—[this produced a grin upon many faces]—'but,' says you, 'if you wait a bit for a day or two, or a week, or maybe for a fortnight, I'll try what I can do to help you.'

"Picture to yourselves a fellow-creature in distress—suppose him to have neither hat, shoe, nor stocking—[this was a touch of the pathetic]—and altogether in a state of utter destitution! Can there be a more melancholy picture than this? No, there can't. But 'tisn't the tithe of it!—a barefaced robbery is the same tithe—think of him without father, mother, or friend upon the earth—both dead, and ne'er another to be had for love or money—maybe he has poor health—maybe he's sick, an' in a s'trange country—[here Jemmy's mother and friends sobbed aloud, and the contagion began to spread]—the priest, in fact, knew where to touch—his face is pale—his eyes sunk with sickness and sorrow in his head—his bones are cuttin' the skin—he knows not where to turn himself—hunger and sickness are strivin' for him.—[Here the grief became loud and general, and even the good-natured preacher's own voice got somewhat unsteady.]—He's in a bad state entirely—miserable! more miserable!! most miserable!!! [och, och, oh!] sick, sore, and sorry!—he's to be pitied, felt for, and compassionated!—[a general outcry!—'tis a faver he has, or an ague, maybe, or a rheumatism, or an embargo (* lumbago, we presume) on the limbs, or the king's evil, or a consumption, or a decline, or God knows but it's the falling sickness—[ooh, och, oh!—och, och, oh!] from the whole congregation, whilst the simple old man's eyes were blinded with tears at the force of the picture he drew.—[Ay, maybe it's the falling-sickness, and in that case how on earth can he stand it.—He can't, he can't, wurra strew, wurra strew!—och, och, oh!—ogh, ogh, ogh!—The Lord in heaven look down upon him—[amin, amin, this blessed an' holy Sunday that's in it!—och, oh!—pity him—[amin, amin!—och, och, an amin!—with miseracordial feeling and benediction! He hasn't a rap in his company!—moneyless, friendless, houseless, an' homeless! Ay, my friends,



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you all have homes—but he has none! Thrust back by every hard-hearted spalpeen, and he, maybe, a better father's son than the Turk that refuses him! Look at your own childre, my friends! Bring the case home to yourselves! Suppose he was one of them—alone on the earth, and none to pity him in his sorrows! Your own childre, I say, in a strange land.—[Here the outcry became astounding; men, women, and children in one general uproar of grief.]—An'—this may all be Jemmy M'Evoy's case, that's going in a week or two to Munster, as a poor scholar—may be his case, I say, except you befriend him, and show your dacency and your feelings, like Christians and Catholics; and for either dacency or kindness, I'd turn yez against any other congregation in the diocess, or in the kingdom—ay, or against Dublin, itself, if it was convariant, or in the neighborhood.”

Now here was a coup de main—not a syllable mentioned about Jemmy M'Evoy, until he had melted them down, ready for the impression, which he accordingly made to his heart's content.

“Ay,” he went on, “an' 'tis the parish of Ballysogarth that has the name, far and near, for both, and well they deserve it. You won't see the poor gossoon go to a strange country—with empty pockets. He's the son of an honest man—one of yourselves; and although he's a poor man, you know 'twas Yallow Sam that made him so—that put him out of his comfortable farm and slipped a black-mouth * into it. You won't turn your backs on the son in regard of that, any way. As for Sam, let him pass; he'll not grind the poor, nor truckle to the rich, when he gives up his stewardship in the kingdom come. Lave him to the friend of the poor—to his God; but the son of them that he oppressed, you will stand up for. He's going to Munster, to learn 'to go upon the Mission:' and, on Sunday next, there will be a collection made here, and at the other two althars for him; and, as your own characters are at stake, I trust it will be neither mane nor shabby. There will be Protestants here, I'll engage, and you must act dacently before them, if it was only to set them a good example. And now I'll tell yez a story that the mintion of the Protestants brings to my mind:—

* In the North of Ireland the word black-mouth means a Presbyterian.

“There was, you see, a Protestant man and a Catholic woman once married together. The man was a swearing, drinking, wicked rascal, and his wife the same: between them they were a blessed pair to be sure. She never bent her knee under a priest until she was on her death-bed; nor was he known ever to enter a church door, or to give a shilling in charity but once, that being—as follows:—He was passing a Catholic place of worship one Sunday, on his way to fowl—for he had his dog and gun with him;—'twas beside a road, and many of the congregation were kneeling out across the way. Just as he passed they were making a collection for a poor scholar—and surely



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they that love the learning deserve to be encouraged! Well, behold you, says one of them, 'will you remember the poor scholar,' says he, 'and put something in the hat? You don't know,' says he, 'but his prayers will be before you.' (* In the other world.) 'True enough, maybe,' says the man, 'and there's a crown to him, for God's sake.' Well and good; the man died, and so did the wife; but the very day before her departure, she got a scapular, and died in it. She had one sister, however, a good creature, that did nothing but fast and pray, and make her soul. This woman had strong doubts upon her mind, and was very much troubled as to whether or not her sister went to heaven; and she begged it as a favor from the blessed Virgin, that the state of her sister's soul might be revealed to her. Her prayer was granted. One night, about a week after her death, her sister came back to her, dressed, all in white, and circled round by a veil of glory.

"'Is that Mary?' said the living sister.

"'It is,' said the other; 'I have got liberty to appear to you,' says she, 'and to tell you that I'm happy.'

"'May the holy Virgin be praised!' said the other. 'Mary, dear, you have taken a great weight off of me,' says she: 'I thought you'd have a bad chance, in regard of the life you led.'

"'When I died,' said the spirit, 'and was on my way to the other world, I came to a place where the road divided itself into three parts;—one to heaven, another to hell, and a third to purgatory. There was a dark gulf between me and heaven, and a breach between me and purgatory that I couldn't step across, and if I had missed my foot there, I would have dropped into hell. So I would, too, only that the blessed Virgin put my own scapular over the breach, and it became firm, and I stepped on it, and got over. The Virgin then desired me to look into hell, and the first person I saw was my own husband, standing with a green sod under his feet! 'He got that favor,' said the blessed Virgin, 'in consequence of the prayers of a holy priest, that had once been a poor scholar, that he gave assistance to, at a collection made for him in such a chapel,' says she, 'Then,' continued the soul, 'Mary,' says she, 'but there's some great change in the world since I died, or why would the people live so long? It can't be less than six thousand years since I departed, and yet I find every one of my friends just as I left them.'

"'Why,' replied the living sister, 'you're only six days dead.'

"'Ah, avourneen!' said the other, 'it can't be—it can't be! for I have been thousands on thousands of years in pain!'—and as she spoke this she disappeared.

"'Now there's a proof of the pains of purgatory, where one day seems as long as a thousand years; and you know we oughtn't to grudge a thrifle to a fellow-creature, that



we may avoid it. So you see, my friends, there's nothing like good works. You know not when or where this lad's prayers may benefit you. If he gets ordained, the first mass he says will be for his benefactors; and in every one he celebrates after that, they must also be remembered: the words are *pro omnibus benefactoribus meis, per omnia secula secularum!*



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“Thirdly—hem—I now lave the thing to yourselves.

“But wasn’t I match for Pettier Donovan, that would brake a stone for the marrow *—Eh?—(a broad laugh at Pother’s rueful visage.)—Pettier, you Turk, will your heart never soften—will you never have dacency, an’ you the only man of your family that’s so? Sure they say you’re going to be marrid some of these days. Well, if you get your wife in my parish, I tell you, Pettier, I’ll give you a fleecin’, for don’t think I’ll marry you as chape as I would a poor honest man. I’ll make you shell out the yallowboys, and ’tis that will go to your heart, you nager you; and then I’ll eat you out of house and home at the Stations. May the Lord grant us, in the mane time, a dacent appetite, a blessing which I wish you all,-----&c.”

* I know not whether this may be considered worthy of a note or not. I have myself frequently seen and tasted what is appropriately termed by the peasantry “Stone Marrow.” It is found in the heart of a kind of soft granite, or perhaps I should rather say freestone. The country people use it medicinally, but I cannot remember what particular disease it is said to cure. It is a soft, saponaceous substance, not unpleasant to the taste, of a bluish color, and melts in the mouth, like the fat of cold meat, leaving the palate greasy. How far an investigation into its nature and properties might be useful to the geologist or physician, it is not for me to conjecture. As the fact appeared to be a curious one, and necessary, moreover, to illustrate the expression used in the text, I thought it not amiss to mention it. It may be a *bonne bouche* for the geologists.

At this moment the congregation was once more in convulsions of laughter at the dressing which Peter, whose character was drawn with much truth and humor, received at the hands of the worthy pastor.

Our readers will perceive that there was not a single prejudice, or weakness, or virtue, in the disposition of his auditory, left untouched in this address. He moved their superstition, their pride of character, their dread of hell and purgatory, their detestation of Yellow Sam, and the remembrance of the injury so wantonly inflicted on M’Evoy’s family; he glanced at the advantage to be derived from the lad’s prayers, the example they should set to Protestants, made a passing hit at tithes; and indulged in the humorous, the pathetic, and the miraculous. In short, he left no avenue to their hearts untouched; and in the process by which he attempted to accomplish his object he was successful.

There is, in fact, much rude, unpolished eloquence among the Roman Catholic priesthood, and not a little which, if duly cultivated by study and a more liberal education, would deserve to be ranked very high.

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We do not give this as a specimen of their modern pulpit eloquence, but as a sample of that in which some of those Irish clergy shone, who, before the establishment of Maynooth, were admitted to orders immediately from the hedge-schools, in consequence of the dearth of priests which then existed in Ireland. It was customary in those days to ordain them even before they departed for the continental colleges, in order that they might, by saying masses and performing other clerical duties, be enabled to add something to the scanty pittance which was appropriated to their support. Of the class to which Father Kavanagh belonged, there are few, if any, remaining. They sometimes were called "Hedge-priests," * by way of reproach; though for our own parts, we wish their non-interference in politics, unaffected piety, and simplicity of character, had remained behind them.

* This nickname was first bestowed upon them by the continental priests, who generally ridiculed them for their vulgarity. They were, for the most part, simple but worthy men.

On the Sunday following, Dominick M'Evoy and his son Jemmy attended mass, whilst the other members of the family, with that sense of honest pride which is more strongly inherent in Irish character than is generally supposed, remained at home, from a reluctance to witness what they could not but consider a degradation. This decency of feeling was anticipated by the priest, and not overlooked by the people; for the former, the reader may have observed, in the whole course of his address never once mentioned the word "charity;" nor did the latter permit the circumstance to go without its reward, according to the best of their ability. So keen and delicate are the perceptions of the Irish, and so acutely alive are they to those nice distinctions of kindness and courtesy, which have in their hearts a spontaneous and sturdy growth, that mocks at the stunted virtues of artificial life.

In the parish of Ballysogarth there were three altars, or places of Roman Catholic worship; and the reader may suppose that the collection made at each place was considerable. In truth, both father and son's anticipations were far under the sum collected. Protestants and Presbyterians attended with their contributions, and those of the latter who scrupled to be present at what they considered an idolatrous worship, did not hesitate to send their quota by some Roman Catholic neighbor.

Their names were accordingly announced with an encomium from the priest, which never failed to excite a warm-hearted murmur of approbation. Nor was this feeling transient, for, we will venture to say, that had political excitement flamed up even to rebellion and mutual slaughter, the persons and property of those individuals would have been held sacred.

At length Jemmy was equipped; and sad and heavy became the hearts of his parents and immediate relations as the morning appointed for his departure drew nigh. On the evening before, several of his more distant relatives came to take their farewell of him, and, in compliance with the usages of Irish hospitality, they were detained for the night.

They did not, however, come empty-handed: some brought money; some brought linen, stockings, or small presents—"jist, Jimmy, asthore, to keep me in yer memory, sure,—and nothin' else it is for, mavourneen."



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Except Jemmy himself, and one of his brothers who was to accompany him part of the way, none of the family slept. The mother exhibited deep sorrow, and Dominick, although he made a show of firmness, felt, now that the crisis was at hand, nearly incapable of parting with the boy. The conversation of their friends and the cheering effects of the popteen, enabled them to sustain his loss better than they otherwise would have done, and the hope of seeing him one day “an ordained priest,” contributed more than either to support them.

When the night was nearly half spent, the mother took a candle and privately withdrew to the room in which the boy slept. The youth was fair, and interesting to look upon—the clustering locks of his white forehead were divided; yet there was on his otherwise open brow, a shade of sorrow, produced by the coming separation, which even sleep could not efface. The mother held the candle gently towards his face, shading it with one hand, lest the light might suddenly awake him; she then surveyed his features long and affectionately, whilst the tears fell in showers from her cheeks.

“There you lie,” she softly sobbed out, in Irish, “the sweet pulse of your mother’s heart; the flower of our flock, the pride of our eyes, and the music of our hearth! Jimmy, avourneen machree, an’ how can I part wid you, my darlin’ son! Sure, when I look at your mild face, and think that you’re takin’ the world on your head to rise us out of our poverty, isn’t my heart breakin’! A lonely house we’ll have afther you, acushla! Goin’ out and comin’ in, at home or abroad, your voice won’t be in my ears, nor your eye smilin’ upon me. An’ thin to think of what you may suffer in a sthrange land! If your head aches, on what tendher breast will it lie? or who will bind the ribbon of comfort * round it? or wipe your fair, mild brow in sickness? Oh, Blessed Mother!—hunger, sickness, and sorrow may come upon you when you’ll be far from your own, an’ from them that loves you!”

* The following quotation, taken from a sketch called “The Irish Midwife,” by the author, gives an illustration of this passage:—“The first, meaning pain in the head, she cures by a very formal and serious process called ‘measuring the head.’ This is done by a ribbon, which she puts round the cranium, repeating during the admeasurement a certain prayer or charm from which the operation is to derive its whole efficacy. The measuring is performed twice—in the first instance, to show that its sutures are separated by disease, or to speak more plainly, that the bones of the head are absolutely opened, and that as a natural consequence the head must be much larger than when the patient is in a state of health. The circumference of the first admeasurement is marked upon a ribbon, after which she repeats the charm that is to remove the headache, and measures the cranium again, in order to show, by a comparison of the two ribbons, that



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the sutures have been closed, the charm successful, and the headache immediately removed. It is impossible to say how the discrepancy in the measurement is brought about; but be that as it may, the writer of this has frequently seen the operation performed in such a way as to defy the most scrutinizing eye to detect any appearance of imposture, and he is convinced that in the majority of cases there is not the slightest imposture intended. The operator is in truth a dupe to a strong and delusive enthusiasm."

This melancholy picture was too much for the tenderness of the mother; she sat down beside the bed, rested her face on her open hand, and wept in subdued but bitter grief. At this moment his father, who probably suspected the cause of her absence, came in and perceived her distress.

"Vara," said he, in Irish also, "is my darlin' son asleep?"

She looked up, with streaming eyes, as he spoke, and replied to him in a manner so exquisitely affecting, when the circumstances of the boy, and the tender allusion made by the sorrowing mother, are considered—that in point of fact no heart—certainly no Irish heart—could withstand it. There is an old Irish melody unsurpassed in pathos, simplicity, and beauty—named in Irish "*Tha ma mackulla's na foscail me,*"—or in English, "I am asleep, and don't waken me." The position of the boy caused the recollection of the old melody to flash into the mother's heart,—she simply pointed to him as the words streamed in a low melodious murmur, but one full of heartrending sorrow, from her lips. The old sacred association—for it was one which she had sung for him a thousand times,—until warned to desist by his tears—deepened the tenderness of her heart, and she said with difficulty, whilst she involuntarily held over the candle to gratify the father's heart by a sight of him. "I was keepin' him before my eye," she said; "God knows but it may be the last night we'll ever see him undher our own roof! Dominick, achora, I doubt I can't part wid him from my heart."

"Then how can I, Vara?" he replied. "Wasn't he my right hand in everything? When was he from me, ever since he took a man's work upon him? And when he'd finish his own task for the day, how kindly he'd begin an' help me wid mine! No, Vara, it goes to my heart to let him go away upon sich a plan, and I wish he hadn't taken the notion into his head at all."

"It's not too late, maybe," replied his mother: "I think it wouldn't be hard to put him off of it; the crathur's own heart is failin' him to lave us. He has sorrow upon his face where he lies."

The father looked at the expression of affectionate melancholy which shaded his features as he slept; and the perception of the boy's internal struggle against his own

domestic attachments in accomplishing his first determination, powerfully touched his heart.

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“Vara,” said he, “I know the boy—he won’t give it up; and ’twould be a pity—maybe a sin—to put him from it. Let the child get fair play, and thry his coorse. If, he fails, he can come back to us, an’ our arms an’ hearts will be open to welcome him! But, if God prospers him, wouldn’t it be a blessin’ that we never expected, to see him in the white robes, celebratin’ one mass for his parents. If these ould eyes could see that, I would be continted to close them in pace an’ happiness for ever.”

“An’ well you’d become them, *avourneen machree!* Well would your mild and handsome countenance look wid the long heavenly stole of innocence upon you! and although it’s atin’ into my heart, I’ll bear it for the sake of seein’ the same blessed sight. Look at that face, Dominick; mightn’t many a lord of the land be proud to have sich a son? May the heavens shower down its blessin’ upon him!”

The father burst into tears. “It is—it is!” said he. “It is the face that ’ud make many a noble heart proud to look at it! Is it any wondher it ’ud cut our hearts, thin, to have it taken from afore our eyes? Come away, Vara, come away, or I’ll not be able to part wid it. It is the lovely face—an’ kind is the heart of my darlin’ child!” As he spoke, he stooped down and kissed the youth’s cheek, on which the warm tears of affection fell, soft as the dew from heaven. The mother followed his example, and they both left the room.

“We must bear it,” said Dominick, as they passed into another apartment; “the money’s gathered, an’ it wouldn’t look well to be goin’ back wid it to them that befriended us. We’d have the blush upon our face for it, an’ the child no advantage.”

“Thru for you, Dominick; and we must make up our minds to live widout him for a while.”

The following morning was dark and cloudy, but calm and without rain. When the family were all assembled, every member of it evinced traces of deep feeling, and every eye was fixed upon the serene but melancholy countenance of the boy with tenderness and sorrow. He himself maintained a quiet equanimity, which, though apparently liable to be broken by the struggles of domestic affection, and in character with his meek and unassuming disposition, yet was supported by more firmness than might be expected from a mind in which kindness and sensibility were so strongly predominant. At this time, however, his character was not developed, or at least not understood, by those that surrounded him. To strong feelings and enduring affections he added a keenness of perception and a bitterness of invective, of which, in his conversation with his father concerning Yellow Sam, the reader has already had sufficient proofs. At breakfast little or nothing was eaten; the boy himself could not taste a morsel, nor any other person in the family. When the form of the meal was over, the father knelt down—“It’s right,” said he, “that we should all go to our knees, and join in a Rosary in behalf of the child that’s goin’ on a good intintion. He won’t thrive the worse bekase the last words that he’ll hear

from his father and mother's lips is a prayer for bringin the blessin' of God down upon his endayvors."

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This was accordingly performed, though not without tears and sobs, and frequent demonstrations of grief; for religion among the peasantry is often associated with bursts of deep and powerful feeling.

When the prayer was over, the boy rose and calmly strapped to his back a satchel covered with deer-skin, containing a few books, linen, and a change of very plain apparel. While engaged in this, the uproar of grief in the house was perfectly heart-rending. When just ready to set out, he reverently took off his hat, knelt down, and, with tears streaming from his eyes, craved humbly and meekly the blessing and forgiveness of his father and mother. The mother caught him in her arms, kissed his lips, and, kneeling also, sobbed out a fervent benediction upon his head; the father now, in the grief of a strong man, pressed him to his heart, until the big burning tears fell upon the boy's face; his brothers and sisters embraced him wildly; next his more distant relations; and lastly, the neighbors who were crowded about the door. After this he took a light staff in his hand, and, first blessing himself after the form of his church, proceeded to a strange land in quest of education.

He had not gone more than a few perches from the door, when his mother followed him with a small bottle of holy water. "Jimmy, *a lanna voght*," (* my poor child) said she, "here's this, an' carry it about you—it will keep evil from you; an' be sure to take good care of the written correckther you got from the priest an' Square Benson; an', darlin', don't be lookin' too often at the cuff o' your coat, for feard the people might get a notion that you have the bank-notes sewed in it. An', Jimmy agra, don't be too lavish upon their Munster crame; they say it's apt to give people the ague. Kiss me agin, agra; an' the heavens above keep you safe and well till we see you once more!"

She then tenderly, and still with melancholy pride, settled his shirt collar, which she thought did not set well about his neck, and kissing him again, with renewed sorrow left him to pursue his journey.

M'Evoy's house was situated on the side of a dark hill—one of that barren description which can be called neither inland nor mountain. It commanded a wide and extended prospect, and the road along which the lad travelled was visible for a considerable distance from it. On a small hillock before the door sat Dominek and his wife, who, as long as their son was visible, kept their eyes, which were nearly blinded with tears, rivetted upon his person. It was now they gave full vent to their grief, and discussed with painful and melancholy satisfaction all the excellent qualities which he possessed. As James himself advanced, one neighbor after another fell away from the train which accompanied him, not, however, until they had affectionately embraced and bid him adieu, and perhaps slipped, with peculiar delicacy, an additional mite into his waistcoat pocket. After the neighbors, then followed the gradual separation from his friends—one by one left him, as in the great journey of life, and in a few hours he found himself accompanied only by his favorite brother.



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This to him was the greatest trial he had yet felt; long and heartrending was their embrace. Jemmy soothed and comforted his beloved brother, but in vain. The lad threw himself on the spot at which they parted, and remained there until Jemmy turned an angle of the road which brought him out of his sight, when the poor boy kissed the marks of his brother's feet repeatedly, and then returned home, hoarse and broken down with the violence of his grief.

He was now alone, and for the first time felt keenly the strange object on which he was bent, together with all the difficulties connected with its attainment. He was young and uneducated, and many years, he knew, must elapse e'er he could find himself in possession of his wishes. But time would pass at home, as well as abroad, he thought; and as there lay no impediment of peculiar difficulty in his way, he collected all his firmness and proceeded.

There is no country on the earth in which either education, or the desire to procure it, is so much revered as in Ireland. Next to the claims of the priest and schoolmaster come those of the poor scholar for the respect of the people. It matters not how poor or how miserable he may be; so long as they see him struggling with poverty in the prosecution of a purpose so laudable, they will treat him with attention and kindness. Here there is no danger of his being sent to the workhouse, committed as a vagrant, or passed from parish to parish until he reaches his own settlement. Here the humble lad is not met by the sneer of purse-proud insolence, or his simple tale answered only in the frown of heartless contempt. No—no—no. The best bit and sup are placed before him; and whilst his poor, but warm-hearted, entertainer can afford only potatoes and salt to his own half-starved family, he will make a struggle to procure something better for the poor scholar; '*Becase he's far from his own, the craihur! An' sure the intuition in him is good, anyhow; the Lord prosper him, an' every one that has the heart set upon the larnin'!*'

As Jemmy proceeded, he found that his satchel of books and apparel gave as clear an intimation of his purpose, as if he had carried a label to that effect upon his back.

"God save you, a bouchal!" said a warm, honest-looking countryman, whom he met driving home his cows in the evening, within a few miles of the town in which he purposed to sleep.

"God save you kindly!"

"Why, thin, 'tis a long journey you have before you, alanna, for I know well it's for Munster you're bound."

"Thru for you; 'tis there, wid the help of God, I'm goin'. A great scarcity of larnin' was in my own place, or I wouldn't have to go at all," said the boy, whilst his eyes filled with tears.



“Tis no discredit in life,” replied the countryman, with untaught natural delicacy, for he perceived that a sense of pride lingered about the boy which made the character of poor scholar sit painfully upon him; “tis no discredit, dear, nor don’t be cast down. I’ll warrant you that God will prosper you; an’ that He may, avick, I pray this day!” and as he spoke, he raised his hat in reverence to the Being whom he invoked. “An’ tell me, dear—where do you intend to sleep to-night?”



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“In the town forrid here,” replied Jemmy. “I’m in hopes I’ll be able to reach it before dark.”

“Pooh! asy you will. Have you any friends or acquaintances there that ’ud welcome you, *a bouchal dhas* (my handsome boy)?”

“No, indeed,” said Jemmy, “they’re all strangers to me; but I can stop in ‘dhry lodgin’,’ for it’s chaper.”

“Well, alanna, I believe you; but *I’m no stranger to you*—so come home wid me to-night; where you’ll get a good bed, and betther thratement nor in any of their dhry lodgins. Give me your books, and I’ll carry them for you. Ethen, but you have a great batch o’ them entirely. Can you make any hand o’ the Latin at all yet?”

“No, indeed,” replied Jemmy, somewhat sorrowfully; “I didn’t ever open a Latin book, at all at all.”

“Well, acushla, everything has a beginnin’;—you won’t be so. An’ I know by your face that you’ll be bright at it, an’ a credit to them owes (* owns) you. There’s my house in the fields beyant, where you’ll be well kept for one night, any way, or for twinty, or for ten times twinty, if you wanted them.”

The honest farmer then commenced the song of *Colleen dhas Crotha na Mho* (* The pretty girl milking her cow), which he sang in a clear mellow voice, until they reached the house.

“Alley,” said the man to his wife, on entering, “here’s a stranger I’ve brought you.”

“Well,” replied Alley, “he’s welcome sure, any way; *Cead millia, failta ghud*, alanna! sit over to the fire. Brian, get up, dear,” said she to one of the children, “an’ let the stranger to the hob.”

“He’s goin’ on a good errand, the Lord bless him!” said the husband, “up the country for the larin’. Put thim books over on the settle; an’ whin the, *girshas* are done milkin’, give him a brave dhrink of the sweet milk; it’s the stuff to thtravel on.”

“Troth, an’ I will, wid a heart an’ a half, wishin’ it was betther I had to give him. Here, Nelly, put down a pot o’ wather, an’ lave soap an’ a *praskeen*, afore you go to milk, till I bathe the dacent boy’s feet. Sore an’ tired they are afther his journey, poor young crathur.”

When Jemmy placed himself upon the hob, he saw that some peculiarly good fortune had conducted him to so comfortable a resting-place. Ho considered this as a good omen; and felt, in fact, much relieved, for the sense of loneliness among strangers was removed.



The house evidently belonged to a wealthy farmer, well to do in the world; the chimney was studded with sides upon sides of yellow smoke-dried bacon, hams, and hung beef in abundance. The kitchen tables were large, and white as milk; and the dresser rich in its shining array of delf and pewter. Everything, in fact, was upon a large scale. Huge meal chests were ranged on one side, and two or three settle beds on the other, conspicuous, as I have said, for their uncommon cleanliness; whilst hung from the ceiling



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were the *glaiks*, a machine for churning; and beside the dresser stood an immense churn, certainly too unwieldy to be managed except by machinery. The farmer was a ruddy-faced Milesian, who wore a drab frieze coat, with a velvet collar, buff waistcoat, corduroy small-clothes, and top-boots* well greased from the tops down. He was not only an agriculturist, but a grazier—remarkable for shrewdness and good sense, generally attended fairs and markets, and brought three or four large droves of fat cattle to England every year. From his fob hung the brass chain and almost rusty key of a watch, which he kept certainly more for use than ornament.

* This in almost every instance, is the dress of wealthy Irish farmer.

“A little sup o’ this,” said he, “won’t take your life,” approaching Jemmy with a bottle of as good poteen as ever escaped the eye of an exciseman; “it’ll refresh you—for you’re tired, or I wouldn’t offer it, by rason that one bint on what you’re bint on, oughtn’t to be makin’ freedoms wid the same dhrink. But there’s a time for everything, an’ there’s a time for this.—Thank you, agra,” he added, in reply to Jemmy, who had drunk his health. “Now, don’t be frettin’—but make yourself as aisy as if you were at your own father’s hearth. You’ll have everything to your heart’s contint for this night; the carts are goin’ in to the market to-morrow airly—you can sit upon them, an’ maybe you’ll get somethin’ more nor you expect: sure the Lord has given it to me, an’ why wouldn’t I share it wid them that wants it more nor I do?”

The lad’s heart yearned to the generous farmer, for he felt that his kindness had the stamp of truth and sincerity upon it. He could only raise his eyes in a silent prayer, that none belonging to him might ever be compelled, as strangers and way-farers, to commit themselves, as he did, to the casualties of life, in pursuit of those attainments which poverty cannot otherwise command. Fervent, indeed, was his prayer; and certain we are, that because it was sincere, it must have been heard.

In the meantime, the good woman, or *vanithee*, had got the pot of water warmed, in which Jemmy was made to put his feet. She then stripped up her arms to the elbows, and, with soap and seedy meal, affectionately bathed his legs and feet: then, taking the *praskeen*, or coarse towel, she wiped them with a kindness which thrilled to his heart.

“And now,” said she, “I must give you a cure for blisters, an’ it’s this:—In the mornin’, if we’re all spared, as we will, plase the Almighty, I’ll give you a needle and some white woollen thread, well soaped. When your blisters gets up, dhraw the soapy thread through them, clip it on each side, an’, my life for yours, they won’t throuble you. Sure I thried it the year I went on my Station to Lough Derg, an’ I know it to be the rale cure.”



“Here, Nelly,” said the farmer,—who sat iwith a placid benevolent face, smoking his pipe on the opposite hob—to one of the maids who came in from milking,—“bring up a noggin of that milk, we want it here: let it be none of your washy *foremilk*, but the *strippins*, Nelly, that has the strinth in it. Up wid it here, a colleen.”



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“The never a one o’ the man but’s doatin’ downright, so he is,” observed the wife, “to go to fill the tired child’s stomach wid plash. Can’t you wait till he ates a thrifle o’ some-thin’ stout, to keep life in him, afther his hard journey? Does your feet feel themselves cool an’ asy now, ahagur?”

“Indeed,” said Jemmy, “I’m almost as fresh as when I set out. ’Twas little thought I had, when I came away this mornin’, that I’d meet wid so much friendship on my journey. I hope it’s a sign that God’s on my side in my undertakin’!”

“I hope so, avourneen—I hope so, an’ it is, too,” replied the farmer, taking the pipe out of his mouth, and mildly whiffing away the smoke, “an’ God’ll be always on your side, as long as your intentions are good. Now ate somethin’—you must want it by this; an’ thin, when you rest yourself bravely, take a tass into a good feather-bed, where you can *sleep rings round you*. (* As much as you please.) Who knows but you’ll be able to say mass for me or some o’ my family yit. God grant that, any way, avick!”

Poor James’s heart was too full to eat much; he took, therefore, only a very slender portion of the refreshments set before him; but his hospitable entertainer had no notion of permitting him to use the free exercise of his discretion on this important point. When James put away the knife and fork, as an indication of his having concluded the meal, the farmer and his wife turned about, both at the same moment, with a kind of astonishment.

“Eh? is it giving over that way you are? Why, alanna, it’s nothin’ at all you’ve tuck; sure little Brian there would make a fool of you, so he would, at the atin’. Come, come, a bouchal—don’t be ashamed, or make any way shtange at all, but ate hearty.”

“I declare I have ate heartily, thank you,” replied James; “oceans itself, so I did. I couldn’t swally a bit more if the house was full.”

“Arrah, Brian,” said the wife, “cut him up more o’ that hung beef, it’s ashamed the crathur is! Take it, avick; don’t we know the journey you had! Faix, if one o’ the boys was out on a day’s thravellin’, you’d see how he’d handle himself.”

“Indeed,” said James, “I can’t—if I could I would. Sure I would be no way backward at all, so I wouldn’t.”

“Throth, an’ you can an’ must,” said the farmer: “the never a rise you’ll rise, till you finish that”—putting over a complement out of all reasonable proportion with his age and size.

“There now’s a small taste, an’ you must finish it. To go to ate nothin’ at all! Hut tut! by the tops o’ my boots, you must put that clear an’ clane out o’ sight, or I’ll go mad an’ barn them.”



The lad recommenced, and continued to eat as long as he could possibly hold out; at length he ceased:—

“I can’t go on,” said he; “don’t ax me: I can’t indeed.”

“Bad manners to the word I’ll hear till you finish it; you know it’s but a thrifle to spake of. Thry agin, avick, but take your time; you’ll be able for it.”



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The poor lad's heart was engaged on other thoughts and other scenes; his home, and its beloved inmates—sorrow and the gush of young affections, were ready to burst forth.

"I cannot ate," said he, and he looked imploringly on the farmer and his wife, whilst the tears started to his eyes—"don't ax me, for my heart's wid them I left behind me, that I may never see agin!" and he wept in a burst of grief which he could not restrain.

Neither the strength nor tenderness of the lad's affection was unappreciated by this excellent couple. In a moment the farmer's wife was also in tears; nor did her husband break the silence for some minutes.

"The Almighty pity an' strengthen him!" said the farmer's wife, "but he has the good an' the kind heart, an' would be a credit to any family.—Whisht, acushla machree—whisht, we won't ax you to ate—no indeed. It was out o' kindness we did it: don't be cast down aither; sure it isn't the ocean you're crossin'; but goin' from one county like to another. God 'll guard an' take care o' you, so he will. Your intintion's good, an' he'll prosper it."

"He will, avick," said the farmer himself—"he will. Cheer up, my good boy! I know thim that's larned an' creditable clargy this day, that went as you're goin'—ay, an' that ris an' helped their parents, an' put them above poverty an' distress; an' never fear, wid a blessin', but you'll do the same."

"That's what brings me at all," replied the boy, drying his tears; "if I was once able to take them out o' their distresses, I'd be happy: only I'm afeard the cares o' the world will break my father's heart before I have it in my power to assist him."

"No such thing, darlin'," said the good woman. "Sure his hopes out o' you, an' his love for you will keep him up; an' you dunna but God may give him a blessin' too, avick."

"Mix another sup o'that for him," said the fanner: "he's low spirited, an' it's too strong to give him any more of it as it is. Childhre, where's the masther from us—eh? Why, thin, God help them, the crathurs—wasn't it thoughtful o' them to lave the place while he was at his dinner, for fraid he'd be dashed—manin' them young crathurs, Alley, But can you tell us where the 'masther' is? Isn't this his night wid us? I know he tuck his dinner here."

"Ay did he; but it's up to Larry Murphy's he's gone, to thry his son in his book-keepin'. Mavrone, but he had time enough to put him well through it afore this, any way."

As she spoke, a short thickset man, with black twinkling eyes and ruddy cheeks entered. This personage was no other than the schoolmaster of that district, who circulated, like a newspaper, from one farmer's house to another, in order to expound for his kind entertainers the news of the day, his own learning, and the very evident extent of their ignorance.



The moment he came in, the farmer and his wife rose with an air of much deference, and placed a chair for him exactly opposite the fire, leaving a respectful distance on each side, within which no illiterate mortal durst presume to sit.

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“Misther Corcoran,” said the farmer, presenting Jemmy’s satchel, through which the shapes of the books were quite plain, “*thig in thu shinn?*” (* Do you understand this) and as he spoke he looked significantly at its owner.

“Ah,” replied the man of letters, “thigum, thigum. (* I understand) God be wid the day when I carried the likes of it. ’Tis a badge of polite genius, that no boy need be ashamed of. So my young suckling of litherature, you’re bound for Munster?—for that counthry where the swallows fly in conic sections—where the magpies and the turkey’s confab in Latin, and the cows and bullocks will roar you Doric Greek—bo-a-o—clamo. What’s your pathronymic? *quo nomine gowdes, Domine doctissime?*”

The lad was silent; but the farmer’s wife turned up the whites of her eyes with an expression of wonder and surprise at the erudition of the “masther.”

“I persave you are as yet uninitiated into the elementary principia of the languages; well—the honor is still before you. What’s your name?”

“James M’Evoy, sir.”

Just now the farmer’s family began to assemble round the spacious hearth; the young lads, whose instruction the worthy teacher claimed as his own peculiar task, came timidly forward, together with two or three pretty bashful girls with sweet flashing eyes, and countenances full of feeling and intelligence. Behind on the settles, half-a-dozen servants of both sexes sat in pairs—each boy placing himself beside his favorite girl. These appeared to be as strongly interested in the learned conversation which the master held, as if they were masters and mistresses of Munster Latin and Doric Greek themselves; but an occasional thump cautiously bestowed by no slender female hand upon the sturdy shoulder of her companion, or a dry cough from one of the young men, fabricated to drown the coming blow, gave slight indications that they contrived to have a little amusement among themselves, altogether independent of Mr. Corcoran’s erudition.

When the latter came in, Jemmy was taking the tumbler of punch which the farmer’s wife had mixed for him; on this he fixed an expressive glance, which instantly reverted to the *vanithee*, and from her to the large bottle which stood in a window to the right of the fire. It is a quick eye, however, that can anticipate Irish hospitality.

“Alley,” said the farmer, ere the wife had time to comply with the hint conveyed by the black, twinkling eye of the schoolmaster; “why, Alley”—

“Sure, I am,” she replied, “an’ will have it for you in less than no time.”

She accordingly addressed herself to the bottle, and in a few minutes handed a reeking jug of punch to the *Farithee*, or good man.



“Come, Masther, by the hand o’ my body, I don’t like dhry talk so long as I can get anything to moisten the discourse. Here’s your health, Masther,” continued the farmer, winking at the rest, “and a speedy conclusion to what you know! In throth, she’s the pick of a good girl—not to mintion what she has for her portion. I’m a friend to the same family, an’ will put a spoke in your wheel, Masther, that’ll sarve you.”



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“Oh, Mr. Lanigan, very well, sir—very well—you’re becoming quite facetious upon me,” said the little man, rather confused; “but upon my credit and reputation, except the amorous inclination and regard to me is on her side,” and he looked sheepishly at his hands, “I can’t say that the arrows of Cupid have as yet pinethrated the sintimintal side of my heart. It is not with me as it was wid Dido—hem—

Non ‘haeret lateri lethalis arundo,’

as Virgil says. Yet I can’t say, but if a friend were to become spokesman for me, and insinuate in my behalf a small taste of amorous sintimintality, why—hem, hem, hem! The company’s health! Lad, James M’Evoy, your health, and success to you, my good boy!—hem, hem!”

“Here’s wishin’ him the same!” said the farmer.

“James,” said the schoolmaster, “you are goin’ to Munsther, an’ I can say that I have travelled it from end to end, not to a bad purpose, I hope—hem! Well, a bouchal, there are hard days and nights before you, so keep a firm heart. If you have money, as ‘tis likely you have, don’t let a single rap of it into the hands of the schoolmaster, although the first thing he’ll do will be to bring you home to his own house, an’ palaver you night an’ day, till he succeeds in persuading you to leave it in his hands for security. You might, if not duly pre-admonished, surrender it to his solicitations, for—

‘Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.’

Michael, what case is mortalium?” added he, suddenly addressing one of the farmer’s sons; “come, now, Michael, where’s your brightness? What case is mortalium?”

The boy was taken by surprise, and for a few minutes could not reply.

“Come man,” said the father, “be sharp, spake out bravely, an’ don’t be afraid; nor don’t be in a hurry aither, we’ll wait for you.”

“Let him alone—let him alone,” said Corcoran; “I’ll face the same boy agin the county for cuteness. If he doesn’t expound that, I’ll never consthru a line of Latin, or Greek, or Masoretic, while I’m livin’.”

His cunning master knew right well that the boy, who was only confused at the suddenness of the question, would feel no difficulty in answering it to his satisfaction. Indeed, it was impossible for him to miss it, as he was then reading the seventh book of Virgil, and the fourth of Homer. It is, however, a trick with such masters to put simple questions of that nature to their pupils, when at the houses of their parents, as knotty and difficult, and when they are answered, to assume an air of astonishment at the profound reach of thought displayed by the pupil.



When Michael recovered himself, he instantly replied, "*Mortalium* is the genitive case of *nemo*, by '*Nomina Partiva*.'"

Corcoran laid down the tumbler, which he was in the act of raising to his lips, and looked at the lad with an air of surprise and delight, then at the farmer and his wife, alternately, and shook his head with much mystery. "Michael," said he to the lad; "will you go out and tell us what the night's doin'."



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The boy accordingly went out—"Why," said Corcoran, in his absence, "if ever there was a phanix, and that boy will be the bird—an Irish phanix he will be, a

Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno!

There's no batin' him at anything he undher-takes. Why, there's thim that are makin' good bread by their larnin', that couldn't resolve that; and you all saw how he did it widout the book! Why, if he goes on at this rate, I'm afraid he'll soon be too many for myself—hem!"

"Too many for yourself! Fill the mather's tumbler, Alley. Too many for yourself! No, no! I doubt he'll never see that day, bright as he is, an' cute. That's it—put a hape upon it. Give me your hand, mather. I thank you for your attention to him, an' the boy is a credit to us. Come over, Michael, avourneen. Here, take what's in this tumbler, an' finish it. Be a good boy and mind your lessons, an' do everything the mather here—the Lord bless him!—bids you; an' you'll never want a frind, mather, nor a dinner, nor a bed, nor a guinea, while the Lord spares me aither the one or the other."

"I know it, Mr. Lanigan, I know it; and I will make that boy the pride of Ireland, if I'm spared. I'll show him *cramboes* that would puzzle the great Scaliger himself; and many other difficulties I'll let him into, that I have never let out yet, except to Tim Kearney, that bate them all at Thrinity College in Dublin up, last June."

"Arrah, how was that, Mather?"

"Tim, you see, went in to his Entrance Examinayshuns, and one of the Fellows came to examine him, but divil a long it was till Tim sacked him.

"Go back agin', says Tim, 'and sind some one that's able to tache me, for you're not.'

"So another greater scholar agin came to yry Tim, and did thry him, and Tim made a *hare of him*, before all that was in the place—five or six thousand ladies and gintlemen, at laste!

"The great learned Fellows thin began to look odd enough; so they picked out the best scholar among them but one, and slipped him at Tim; but well becomes Tim, the never a long it was till he had him, too, as dumb as a post. The fellow went back—

"Gintlemen,' says he to the rest, 'we'll be disgraced all out,' says he, 'for except the Prowost sacks that Munsther spalpeen, he'll bate us all, an' we'll never be able to hould up our heads afther.'

"Accordingly, the Prowost attacks Tim; and such a meetin' as they had, never was seen in Thrinity College since its establishment. At last when they had been nine hours and a half at it, the Prowost put one word to him that Tim couldn't expound, so he lost it by one



word only. For the last two hours the Prowost carried on the examinashun in Hebrew, thinking, you see, he had Tim there; but he was mistaken, for Tim answered him in good Munsther Irish, and it so happened that they understood each other, for the two languages are first cousins, or,



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at all evints, close blood relations. Tim was then pronounced to be the best scholar in Ireland except the Prowost; though among ourselves, they might have thought of the man that taught him. That, however, wasn't all. A young lady fell in love wid Tim, and is to make him a present of herself and her great fortune (three estates) the moment he becomes a counsellor; and in the meantime she allows him thirty pounds a year to bear his expenses, and live like a gintleman.

"Now to return to the youth in the corner: *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*, Jemmy keep your money, or give it to the priest to keep, and it will be safest; but by no means let the Hyblean honey of the schoolmaster's blarney deprive you of it, otherwise it will be a *vale, vale, longum vale* between you. *Crede experto!*"

"Masther," said the farmer, "many a sthrange accident you met wid on yer thravels through Munsther?"

"No doubt of that, Mr. Lanigan. I and another boy thtravelled it in society together. One day we were walking towards a gintleman's house on the road side, and it happened that we met the owner of it in the vicinity, although we didn't know him to be such.

"*Salvete Domini!*" said he, in good fresh Latin.

"*Tu sis salvus, quoque!*" said I to him, for my comrade wasn't cute, an' I was always orathor.

"*Unde veniti?*" said he, comin' over us wid another deep piece of larnin' the construction of which was, 'where do yez come from?'

"I replied, '*Per varios casus et tot discrimina rerum, venimus a Mayo.*'

"Good!" said he, 'you're bright; follow me.'

"So he brought us over to his own house, and ordered us bread and cheese and a posset; for it was Friday, an' we couldn't touch mate. He, in the mane time, sat an chatted along wid us. The thievin' cook, however, in makin' the posset, kept the curds to herself, except a slight taste here and there, that floated on the top; but she was liberal enough of the whey, any how.

"Now I had been well trained to fishing in my more youthful days; and no gorsoon could grope a trout wid me. I accordingly sent the spoon through the pond before me wid the skill of a connoisseur; but to no purpose—it came up wid nothin' but the whey.

"So, said I off hand to the gintleman, houlding up the bowl, and looking at it with a disappointed face,



'Apparent *rari* nantes in gurgite vasto.'

'This,' says I, 'plase your hospitality, may be Paotolus, but the divil a taste o' the proper sand is in the bottom of it.'

"The wit of this, you see, pleased him, and we got an excellent treat in his *studium*, or study: for he was determined to give myself another trial.

"What's the wickedest line in Virgil?" said he.

"Now I had Virgil at my fingers' ends, so I answered him:

'Flectere si nequeo superos, Aeheronta movebo,'



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“‘Very good,’ said he, ‘you have the genius, and will come to somethin’ yet: now tell me the most moral line in Virgil.’

“I answered:

‘Discere justitiam moniti et non temnere divos.’ *

* He is evidently drawing the long-bow here; this anecdote has been told before.

“‘Depend upon it,’ said he, ‘you will be a luminary. The morning star will be but a farthing candle to you; and if you take in the learning as you do the cheese, in a short time there won’t be a man in Munsther fit to teach you,’ and he laughed, for you see he had a tendency to jocosity.

“He did not give me up here, however, being determined to go deeper wid me.

“‘Can you translate a newspaper into Latin prose?’ said he.

“Now the divil a one o’ me was just then sure about the prose, so I was goin’ to tell him; but before I had time to speak, he thrust the paper into my hand, and desired me to thranslate half-a-dozen barbarous advertisements.

“The first that met me was about a reward offered for a Newfoundland dog and a terrier, that had been stolen from a fishing-tackle manufacturer, and then came a list of his shabby merchandise, ending with a long-winded encomium upon his gunpowder, shot, and double-barrelled guns. Now may I be shot with a blank cartridge, if I ever felt so much at an amplush in my life, and I said so.

“‘Your honor has hooked me wid the fishing hooks,’ said I; ‘but I grant the cheese was good bait, any how.’

“So he laughed heartily, and bid me go on.

“Well, I thought the first was difficult: but the second was Masoretic to it—something about drawbacks, excisemen, and a long custom-house list, that would puzzle Publius Virgilius Maro, if he was set to translate it. However, I went through wid it as well as I could; where I couldn’t find Latin, I laid in the Greek, and where the Greek failed me, I gave the Irish, which, to tell the truth, in consequence of its vernacularity, I found to be the most convariant. Och, och many a larned scrimmage I have signalized myself in, during my time. Sure my name’s as common as a mail-coach in Thrinity College; and ‘tis well known there isn’t a fellow in it but I could sack, except may be, the prowost. That’s their own opinion. ‘Corcoran,’ says the prowost, ‘is the most larned man in Ireland; an’ I’m not ashamed,’ says he, ‘to acknowledge that I’d rather decline meeting him upon deep points.’ Ginteels, all your healths—hem! But among ourselves I could



bog him in a very short time; though I'd scorn to deprive the gintleman of his reputaytion or his place, even if he sent me a challenge of larnin' to-morrow, although he's too cute to venture on doing that—hem, hem!”

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To hear an obscure creature, whose name was but faintly known in the remote parts even of the parish in which he lived, draw the long-bow at such a rate, was highly amusing. The credulous character of his auditory, however, was no slight temptation to him; for he knew that next to the legends of their saints, or the Gospel itself, his fictions ranked in authenticity; and he was determined that it should not be his fault if their opinion of his learning and talents were not raised to the highest point. The feeling experienced by the poor scholar, when he awoke the next morning, was one both of satisfaction and sorrow. He thought once more of his home and kindred, and reflected that it might be possible he had seen the last of his beloved relations. His grief, however, was checked when he remembered the warm and paternal affection with which he was received on the preceding night by his hospitable countryman. He offered up his prayers to God; humbly besought his grace and protection; nor did he forget to implore a blessing upon those who had thus soothed his early sorrows, and afforded him, though a stranger and friendless, a shelter, comfort, and sympathy.

“I hope,” thought he, “that I will meet many such, till I overcome my difficulties, and find myself able to assist my poor father and mother!”

And he did meet many such among the humble, and despised, and neglected of his countrymen; for—and we say it with pride—the character of this excellent farmer is thoroughly that of our peasantry within the range of domestic life.

When he had eaten a comfortable breakfast, and seen his satchel stuffed with provision for his journey, the farmer brought him up to his own room, in which were also his wife and children.

“God,” said he, “has been good to me; blessed be his holy name!—better it appears in one sense, than he has been to you, dear, though maybe I don’t deserve it as well. But no matter, acushla; I have it, and you want it; so here’s a thrifle to help your forrid in your larnin’; and all I ask from you is to offer up a bit of a prayer for me, of an odd time, and if ever you live to be a priest, to say, if it wouldn’t be troublesome, one Mass for me and those that you see about me. It’s not much, James agra—only two guineas. They may stand your friend, when friends will be scarce with you; though, I hope, that won’t be the case either.”

The tears were already streaming down Jemmy’s cheeks. “Oh,” said the artless boy, “God forever reward you! but sure I have a great dale of money in the—in the—cuff of my coat. Indeed I have, and I won’t want it!”

The farmer, affected by the utter simplicity of the lad, looked at his wife and smiled, although a tear stood in his eye at the time. She wiped her eyes with her apron, and backed the kind offer of her husband.



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“Take it, asthore,” she added, “in your cuff! Musha, God help you! sure it’s not much you or the likes of you can have in your cuff, avourneen! Don’t be ashamed, but take it; we can well afford it, glory be to God for it! It’s not, agra, bekase you’re goin’ the way you are—though that same’s an honor to you—but bekase our hearts warmed to you, that we offered it, an’ bekase we would wish you to be thinkin’ of us now an’ thin, when you’re in a strange part of the country. Let me open your pocket an’ put them into it. That’s a good, boy, thank you, an’ God bless an’ prosper you! I’m sure you were always biddable.”

“Now childre,” said the farmer, addressing his sons and daughters, “never see the sthranger widout a friend, nor wantin’ a bed or a dinner, when you grow up to be men an’ women. There’s many a turn in this world; we may be strangers ourselves; an’ think of what I would feel if any of you was far from me, widout money or friends, when I’d hear that you met a father in a strange counthry that lightened your hearts by his kindness. Now, dear, the carts ’ll be ready in no time—eh? Why there they are at the gate waitin’ for you. Get into one of them, an’ they’ll lave you in the next town. Come, roan, budan’ age, be stout-hearted, an’ don’t cry; sure we did nothin’ for you to spake of.”

He shook the poor scholar by the hand, and drawing his hat over his eyes, passed hurriedly out of the room. Alley stooped down, kissed his lips, and wept; and the children each embraced him with that mingled feeling of compassion and respect which is uniformly entertained for the poor scholar in Ireland.

The boy felt as if he had been again separated from his parents; with a sobbing bosom and wet cheeks he bid them farewell, and mounting one of the carts was soon beyond sight and hearing of the kind-hearted farmer and his family.

When the cart had proceeded about a mile, it stopped, and one of the men who accompanied it addressing a boy who passed with two sods of turf under his arm, desired him to hurry on and inform his master that they waited for him.

“Tell Misther Corcoran to come into coort,” said the man, laughing, “my Lordship’s waitin’ to hear his defince for intindin’ not to run away wid Miss Judy Malowny. Tell him Lord Garty’s ready to pass sintince on him for not stalin’ the heart of her wid his Rule o’ Three. Ha! by the holy farmer, you’ll get it for stayin’ from school to this hour. Be quick, abouchal!”

In a few minutes the trembling urchin, glad of any message that might serve to divert the dreaded birch from himself, entered the, uproarious “Siminary,” caught his forelock, bobbed down his head to the master, and pitched his “two sods” into a little’heap of turf which lay in the corner of the school.



“Arrah, Pat Roach, is this an hour to inter into my establishment wid impunity? Eh, you Rosicrusian?”

“Masther, sir,” replied the adroit monkey, “I’ve a message for you, sir, i’ you plase.”



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“An’ what might the message be, Masther; Pat Roach? To dine to-day wid your worthy father, abouchal?”

“No, sir; it’s from one o’ Mr. Lanigan’s boys—him that belongs to the carts, sir; he wants to spake to you, sir, i’ you plase.”

“An’ do you give that by way of an apologetical oration for your absence from the advantages of my tuition until this hour? However, non constat Patrici; I’ll pluck the crow wid you on my return. If you don’t find yourself a well-flogged youth for your ‘mitchin,’ never say that this right hand can administer condign punishment to that part of your physical theory which constitutes the antithesis to your vacuum caput. En et ewe, you villain,” he added, pointing to the birch, “it’s newly cut and trimmed, and pregnant wid alacrity for the operation. I correct, Patricius, on fundamental principles, which you’ll soon feel to your cost.”

“Masther, sir,” replied the lad, in a friendly, conciliating tone, “my father ’ud be obliged to you, if you’d take share of a fat goose wid him to-morrow.”

“Go to your sate, Paddy, avourneen; devil a dacent boy in the seminary I joke—so much wid, as I do wid yourself; an’ all out of respect for your worthy parents. Faith, I’ve a great regard for them, all out, an’ tell them so.”

He then proceeded to the carts, and approaching Jemmy, gave him such advice touching his conduct in Munster, as he considered to be most serviceable to an inexperienced lad of his years.

“Here,” said the kind-hearted soul—“here, James, is my mite; it’s but bare ten shillings; but if I could make it a pound for you, it would give me a degree of delectability which I have not enjoyed for a long time. The truth is, there’s something like the *nodus matrimonii*, or what they facetiously term the priest’s gallows, dangling over my head, so that any little thrifle I may get must be kept together for that crisis, James, abouchal; so that must be my apology for not giving you more, joined to the naked fact, that I never was remarkable for a superfluity of cash under any circumstances. Remember what I told you last night. Don’t let a shilling of your money into the hands of the masther you settle wid. Give it to the parish priest, and dhraw it from him when you want it. Don’t join the parties or the factions of the school. Above all, spake ill of nobody; and if the; masther is harsh upon you, either bear it patiently, or mintion it to the priest, or to some other person of respectability in the parish, and you’ll be protected. You’ll be apt to meet cruelty enough, my good boy: for there are larned Neros in Munster, who’d flog if the province was in flames.



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“Now, James, I’ll tell you what you’ll do, when you reach the larned south. Plant yourself on the highest hill in the neighborhood wherein the academican with whom you intend to stop, lives. Let the hour of reconnoitring be that in which dinner is preparing. When seated there, James, take a survey of the smoke that ascends from the chimneys of the farmer’s houses, and be sure to direct your steps to that from which the highest and merriest column issues. This is the old plan and it is a sure one. The highest smoke rises from the largest fire, the largest fire boils the biggest pot, the biggest pot generally holds the fattest bacon, and the fattest bacon is kept by the richest farmer. It’s a wholesome and comfortable climax, my boy, and one by which I myself was enabled to keep a dacent portion of educated flesh between the master’s birch and my ribs. The science itself is called Gastric Geography, and is peculiar only to itinerant young gentlemen who seek for knowledge in the classical province of Munster.

“Here’s a book that thravelled along wid myself through all my peregrinations—Creech’s Translation of Horace. Keep it for my sake; and when you accomplish your education, if you return home this way, I’d thank you to give me a call. Farewell! God bless you and prosper you as I wish, and as I am sure you deserve.”

He shook the lad by the hand; and as it was probable that his own former struggles with poverty, when in the pursuit of education, came with all the power of awakened recollection to his mind, he hastily drew his hand across his eyes, and returned to resume the brief but harmless authority of the ferula.

After arriving at the next town, Jemmy found himself once more prosecuting his journey alone. In proportion as he advanced into a strange land, his spirits became depressed, and his heart cleaved more and more to those whom he had left behind him. There is, however, an enthusiasm in the visions of youth, in the speculations of a young heart, which frequently overcomes difficulties that a mind taught by the experience of life would often shrink from encountering. We may all remember the utter recklessness of danger, with which, in our youthful days, we crossed floods, or stood upon the brow of yawning precipices—feats which, in after years, the wealth of kingdoms could not induce us to perform. Experience, as well as conscience, makes cowards of us all.

The poor scholar in the course of his journey had the satisfaction of finding himself an object of kind and hospitable attention to his countrymen. His satchel of books was literally a passport to their hearts. For instance, as he wended his solitary way, depressed and travel-worn, he was frequently accosted by laborers from behind a ditch on the roadside, and, after giving a brief history of the object he had in view, brought, if it was dinner-hour, to some farm-house or cabin, where he was made to partake of their meal. Even those poor creatures who gain a scanty subsistence by keeping what are called “dhry lodgins,” like *lucus a non lucendo*, because they never keep out the rain, and have mostly a bottle of whiskey for those who know how to call for it, even they, in most instances, not only refused to charge the poor scholar for his bed, but declined to receive any remuneration for his subsistence.



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“Och, och, no, you poor young cratlur, not from you. No, no; if we wouldn’t help the likes o’ you, who ought we to help? No dear; but instead o’ the *airighad*, (* money) jist lave us your blessin’, an’ maybe we’ll thrive as well wid that, as we would wid your little ‘pences, that you’ll be wanting for yourself whin your frinds won’t be near to help you.”

Many, in fact, were the little marks of kindness and attention which the poor lad received on his way. Sometimes a ragged peasant, if he happened to be his fellow-traveller, would carry his satchel so long as they travelled together, or a carman would give him a lift on his empty car; or some humorous postilion, or tipsy “shay-boy,” with a comical leer in his eye, would shove him into his vehicle; remarking—

“Bedad, let nobody say you’re a poor scholar now, an’ you goin’ to school in a coach! Be the piper that played afore Moses, if ever any rascal upraids you wid it, tell him, says you—‘You damned rap,’ says you, ‘I wint to school in a coach! an’ that,’ says you, ‘was what none o’ yer beggarly gin oration was ever able to do,’ says you; ‘an’ moreover, be the same token,’ says you, ‘be the holy farmer, if you bring it up to me, I’ll make a third eye in your forehead wid the butt o’ this whip,’ says you. Whish! darlins! That’s the go! There’s drivin’, Barny! Eh?”

At length, after much toil and travel, he reached the South, having experienced as he proceeded a series of affectionate attentions, which had, at least, the effect of reconciling him to the measure he had taken, and impressing upon his heart a deeper confidence in the kindness and hospitality of his countrymen.

Upon the evening of the day on which he terminated his journey, twilight was nearly falling; the town in which he intended to stop for the night was not a quarter of a mile before him, yet he was scarcely able to reach it; his short, yielding steps were evidently those of a young and fatigued traveller: his brow was moist with perspiration: he had just begun, too, to consider in what manner he should introduce himself to the master who taught the school at which he had been advised to stop, when he heard a step behind him, and on looking back, he discovered a tall, well-made, ruddy-faced young man, dressed in black, with a book in his hand, walking after him.

“*Unde et quo viator?*” said the stranger, on coming up to him.

“Oh, sir,” replied Jemmy, “I have not Latin yet.”

“You are on your way to seek it, however,” replied the other. “Have you travelled far?”

“A long way, indeed, sir; I came from the County -----, sir--the upper part of it.”

“Have you letters from your parish priest?”



“I have, sir, and one from my father’s landlord, Square Benson, if you ever heard of him.”

“What’s your object in learning Latin?”

“To be a priest, wid the help o’ God; an’ to rise my poor father an’ mother out of their poverty.”



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His companion, after hearing this reply, bent a glance upon him, that indicated the awakening of an interest in the lad much greater than he probably otherwise would have felt.

“It’s only of late,” continued the boy, “that my father an’ mother got poor; they were once very well to do in the world. But they were put out o’ their farm in ordher that the agint might put a man that had married a *get* (* A term implying illegitimacy) of his own into it. My father intended to lay his case before Colonel B-----, the landlord; but he couldn’t see him at all, bekase he never comes near the estate. The agint’s called Yallow Sam, sir; he’s rich through cheatery an’ dishonesty; puts money out at intherest, then goes to law, an’ brakes the people entirely; for, somehow, he never was known to lose a lawsuit at all, sir. They say it’s the divil, sir, that keeps the lawyers on his side; an’ that when he an’ the lawyers do be dhrawin’ up their writins, the devil—God betune me an’ harm!—does be helpin’ them!”

“And is Colonel B----- actually--or, rather, was he your father’s landlord?”

“He was, indeed, sir; it’s thruth I’m tellin’ you.”

“Singular enough! Stand beside me here—do you see that large house to the right among the trees?”

“I do, sir; a great big house, entirely—like a castle, sir.”

“The same. Well, that house belongs to Colonel B-----, and I am very intimate with him. I am Catholic curate of this parish; and I was, before my ordination, private tutor in his family for four years.”

“Maybe, sir, you might have intherest to get my father back into his farm?”

“I do not know that, my good lad, for I am told Colonel B-----is rather embarrassed, and, if I mistake not, in the power of the man you call Yallow Sam, who has, I believe, heavy mortgages upon his property. But no matter; if I cannot help your father, I shall be able to serve yourself. Where do you intend to stop for the night?”

“In dhry lodgin’, sir, that’s where my father and mother bid me stop always. They war very kind to me, sir, in the dhry lddgins.”



“Who is there in Ireland who would not be kind to you, my good boy? I trust you do not neglect your religious duties?”

“Wid the help o’ God, sir, I strive to attind to them as well as I can; particularly since I left my father and mother. Every night an’ mornin’, sir, I say five Fathers, five Aves, an’ a Creed; an’ sometimes when I’m walkin’ the road, I slip up an odd Father, sir, an’ Ave, that God may grant me good luck.”

The priest smiled at his candor and artlessness, and could not help feeling the interest which the boy had already excited in him increase.

“You do right,” said he, “and take care that you neglect not the worship of God. Avoid bad company; be not quarrelsome at school; study to improve yourself diligently; attend mass regularly; and be punctual in going to confession.”



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After some further conversation, the priest and he entered the town together.

“This is my house,” said the former; “or if not altogether mine—at least, that in which I lodge; let me see you here at two o’clock to-morrow. In the meantime, follow me, and I shall place you with a family where you will experience every kindness and attention that can make you comfortable.”

He then led him a few doors up the street, till he stopped at a decent-looking “House of Entertainment,” to the proprietors of which he introduced him.

“Be kind to this strange boy,” said the worthy clergyman, “and whatever the charges of his board and lodging may be until we get him settled, I shall be accountable for them.”

“God forbid, your Reverence, that ever a penny belongin’ to a poor boy lookin’ for his larnin’ should go into our pockets, if he was wid us twelve months in the year. No—no! He can stay with the *bouchaleens*; (* little boys) let them be thryin’ one another in their books. If he is fardher on in the Latin then Andy, he can help Andy; an’ if Andy has the foreway of him, why Andy can help him. Come here, boys, all of yez. Here’s a comrade for yez—a dacent boy that’s lookin’ for his larnin’, the Lord enable him! Now be kind to him, an’ whisper,” he added, in an undertone, “don’t be bringin’ a blush to the gorsoon’s face. Do ye hear? Ma chorp! if ye do!—Now mind it. Ye know what I can do whin I’m well vexed! Go, now, an’ get him somethin’ to ate an’ dhrink, an’ let him sleep wid Barney in the feather bed.”

During the course of the next day, the benevolent curate introduced him to the parish priest, who from the frequent claims urged by poor scholars upon his patronage, felt no particular interest in his case. He wrote a short letter, however, to the master with whom Jemmy intended to become a pupil, stating that “he was an honest boy, the son of legitimate parents, and worthy of consideration.”

The curate, who saw further into the boy’s character than the parish priest, accompanied him on the following day to the school; introduced him to the master in the most favorable manner, and recommended him in general to the hospitable care of all the pupils. This introduction did not serve the boy so much as might have been expected; there was nothing particular in the letter of the parish priest, and the curate was but a curate—no formidable personage in any church where the good-will of the rector has not been already secured.

Jemmy returned that day to his lodgings, and the next morning, with his Latin Grammar under his arm, he went to school to taste the first bitter fruits of the tree of knowledge.

On entering it, which he did with a beating heart, he found the despot of a hundred subjects sitting behind a desk, with his hat on, a brow superciliously severe, and his nose crimped into a most cutting and vinegar curl. The truth was, the master knew the



character of the curate, and felt that because he had taken Jemmy under his protection, no opportunity remained for him of fleecing the boy, under the pretence of securing his money, and that consequently the arrival of the poor scholar would be no windfall, as he had expected.



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When Jemmy entered, he looked first at the master for his welcome; but the master, who verified the proverb, that there are none so blind as those who will not see, took no notice whatsoever of him. The boy then looked timidly about the school in quest of a friendly face, and indeed few faces except friendly ones were turned upon him.

Several of the scholars rose up simultaneously to speak to him; but the pedagogue angrily inquired why they had left their seats and their business.

“Why, sir,” said a young Munsterman, with a fine Milesian face—“be gorra, sir, I believe if we don’t welcome the poor scholar, I think you won’t. This is the boy, sir, that Mr. O’Brien came along wid yistherday, an’ spoke so well of.”

“I know that, Thady; and Misther O’Brien thinks, because he himself first passed through that overgrown hedge-school wid slates upon the roof of it, called Thrinity College, and matriculated in Maynooth ather, that he has legal authority to recommend every young vagrant to the gratuitous benefits of legitimate classicality. An’ I suppose, that you are acting the Pathrun, too, Thady, and intind to take this young wild-goose under your protection?”

“Why, sir, isn’t he a poor scholar? Sure he mustn’t want his bit an’ sup, nor his night’s lodgin’, anyhow. You’re to give him his larnin’ only, sir.”

“I suppose so, Mr. Thaddeus; but this is the penalty of celebrity. If I weren’t so celebrated a man for classics as I am, I would have none of this work. I tell you, Thady, if I had fifty sons I wouldn’t make one o’ them celebrated.”

“Wait till you have one first, sir, and you may make him as great a numskull as you plase, Master.”

“But in the meantime, Thady, I’ll have no dictation from you, as to whether I have one or fifty; or as to whether he’ll be an ass or a Newton. I say that a dearth of larnin’ is like a year of famine in Ireland. When the people are hard pushed, they bleed the fattest bullocks, an’ live on their blood; an’ so it is wid us Academicians. It’s always he that has the most larned blood in his veins, and the greatest quantity of it that such hungry leeches fasten on.”

“Thru for you, sir,” said the youth with a smile; “but they say the bullocks always fatten the bettther for it. I hope you’ll bleed well now, sir.”

“Thady, I don’t like, the curl of your nose; an’, moreover, I have always found you prone to sedition. You remember your conduct at the ‘Barring out.’ I tell you it’s well that your worthy father is a dacent wealthy man, or I’d be apt to give you a *memoria technica* on the *subtratum*, Thady.”



“God be praised for my father’s wealth, sir! But I’d never wish to have a good memory in the way you mention.”

“Faith, an’ I’ll be apt to add that to your other qualities, if you don’t take care of yourself.”

“I want no such addition, Masther; if you do, you’ll be apt to subtract yourself from this neighborhood, an’, maybe, ther’e won’t be more than a cipher gone out of it, afther all.”



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“Thady, you’re a wag,” exclaimed the crestfallen pedagogue; “take the lad to your own sate, and show him his task. How! is your sister’s sore throat, Thady?”

“Why, sir,” replied the benevolent young wit, “she’s betther than I am. She can swallow more, sir.”

“Not of larin’, Thady; there you’ve the widest gullet in the parish.”

“My father’s the richest man in it, Masther,” replied Thady. “I think, sir, my! gullet and his purse are much about the same size—wid you.”

“Thady, you’re first-rate at a reply;—but exceedingly deficient in the retort courteous. Take the lad to your sate, I say, and see how far he is advanced, and what he is fit for. I suppose, as you are so gineros, you will volunteer to tache him yourself.”

“I’ll do that wid pleasure, sir; but I’d like to know whether you intind to tache him or not.”

“An’ I’d like to know, Thady, who’s to pay me for it, if I do. A purty return Michael Rooney made me for making him such a linguist as he is. ‘You’re a tyrant,’ said he, when he grew up, ’and instead of expecting me to thank you for your instructions, you ought to thank me for not preparing you for the county hospital, as a memento of the cruelty and brutality you made me feel, when I had the misfortune to be a poor scholar! under you.’ And so, because he became curate of the parish, he showed me the outside of it.”

“But will you tache this poor young boy, sir?”

“Let me know who’s to guarantee his payments.”

“I have money myself, sir, to pay you for two years,” replied Jemmy. “They told me, sir, that you were a great scholar, an’ I refused to stop in other schools by rason of the name you have for Latin and Greek.”

“Verbum sat,” exclaimed the barefaced knave. “Come here. Now, you see, I persave you have dacency. Here is your task; get that half page by heart. You have a cute look, an’ I’ve no doubt but the stuff’s in you. Come to me aafter dismiss, ’till we have a little talk together.”

He accordingly pointed out the task, after which he placed him at his side, lest the inexperienced boy might be put on his guard by any of the scholars. In this intention, however, he was frustrated by Thady, who, as he thoroughly detested the knavish tyrant, resolved to caution the poor scholar against his dishonesty. Thady, indeed most heartily despised the mercenary pedagogue, not only for his obsequiousness to the rich, but on account of his severity to the children of the poor. About two o’clock the young wag went out for a few minutes, and immediately returned in great haste to inform the master, that Mr. Delaney, the parish priest, and two other gentlemen wished to see him



over at the Cross-Keys, an inn which was kept at a place called the Nine Mile House, within a few perches of the school. The parish priest, though an ignorant, insipid old man, was the master's patron, and his slightest wish a divine law to him. The little despot, forgetting his prey, instantly repaired to the Cross-Keys, and in his absence, Thady, together with the larger boys of the school, made M'Evoy acquainted with the fraud about to be practised on him.



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“His intintion,” said they, “is to keep you at home to-night, in ordher to get whatever money you have into his own hands, that he may keep it safe for you; but if you give him a penny, you may bid farewell to it. Put it in the curate’s hands,” added Thady, “or in my father’s, an’ thin it’ll be safe. At all evints, don’t stay wid him this night. He’ll take your money and then turn you off in three or four weeks.”

“I didn’t intind to give him my money,” replied Jemmy; “a schoolmaster I met on my way here, bid me not to do it. I’ll give it to the priest.”

“Give it to the curate,” said Thady—“wid him it’ll be safe; for the parish priest doesn’t like to trouble himself wid anything of the mind.”

This was agreed upon; the boy was prepared against the designs of the master, and a plan laid down for his future conduct. In the meantime, the latter re-entered the school in a glow of indignation and disappointment.

Thady, however, disregarded him; and as the master knew that the influence of the boy’s father could at any time remove him from the parish, his anger subsided without any very violent consequences. The parish priest was his avowed patron, it is true; but if the parish priest knew that Mr. O’Rorke was dissatisfied with him, that moment he would join Mr. O’Rorke in expelling him: from the neighborhood. Mr. O’Rorke was a wealthy and a hospitable man, but the schoolmaster was neither the one nor the other.

During school-hours that day, many a warm-hearted urchin entered into conversation with the poor scholar; some moved by curiosity to hear his brief and simple history; others anxious to offer him a temporary asylum in their father’s houses; and several to know if he had the requisite books, assuring him if he had not they would lend, them to him. These proofs of artless generosity touched the homeless youth’s heart the more acutely, inasmuch as he could perceive but too clearly that the eye of the master rested upon him, from time to time, with no auspicious glance.

When the scholars were dismissed, a scene occurred which was calculated to produce a smile, although it certainly placed the poor scholar in a predicament by no means agreeable. It resulted from a contest among the boys as to who should first bring him home. The master who, by that cunning for which the knavish are remarkable, had discovered in the course of the day that his designs upon the boy’s money was understood, did not ask him to his house. The contest was, therefore, among the scholars; who, when the master had disappeared from the school-room, formed themselves into a circle, of which Jemmy was the centre, each pressing his claim to secure him.

“The right’s wid me,” exclaimed Thady; “I stood to him all day, and I say I’ll have him for this night. Come wid me, Jimmy. Didn’t I do most for you to-day?”



“I’ll never forget your kindness,” replied poor Jemmy, quite alarmed at the boisterous symptoms of pugilism which already began to appear. In fact, many a tiny fist was shut, as a suitable, accompaniment to the arguments with which they enforced their assumed rights.



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“There, now,” continued Thady, “that I puts an ind to it; he says he’ll never forget my kindness. That’s enough; come wid me, Jimmy.”

“Is it enough?” said a lad, who, if his father was less wealthy than Thady’s, was resolved to put strength of arm against strength of purse. “Maybe it isn’t enough! I say I bar it, if your fadher was fifty times as rich!—Rich! Arrah, don’t be comin’ over us in regard of your riches, man alive! I’ll bring the sthrange boy home this very night, an’ it isn’t your father’s dirty money that’ll prevint me.”

“I’d advise you to get a double ditch about your nose,” replied Thady, “before you begin to say anything disrespectful against my father.—Don’t think to ballyrag over me. I’ll bring the boy, for I have the best right to him. Didn’t I do (* outwit) the masther on his account?”

“A double ditch about my nose?”

“Aye!”

“Are you able to fight me?”

“I’m able to thry it, anyhow, an’ willin too.”

“Do you say you’re able to fight me?”

“I’ll bring the boy home whether or not.”

“Thady’s not your match, Jack Ratigan,” said another boy. “Why don’t you challenge your match?”

“If you say a word, I’ll half-sole your eye. Let him say whether he’s able to fight me like a man or not. That’s the chat.”

“Half-sole my eye! Thin here I am, an’ why don’t you do it. You’re crowin’ over a boy that you’re bigger than. I’ll fight you for Thady. Now half-sole my eye if you dar! Eh? Here’s my eye, now! Arrah, be the holy man, I’d—Don’t we know the white hen’s in you. Didn’t Barny Murtagh cow you at the black-pool, on Thursday last, whin we wor bathin’?”

“Come, Ratigan,” said Thady, “peel an’ turn out. I say, I am able to fight you; an’ I’ll make you ate your words against my father, by way of givin’ you your dinner. An’ I’ll make the dacent strange boy walk home wid me over your body—that is, if he’d not be afraid to dirty his feet.”

Ratigan and Thady immediately set to, and in a few minutes there were scarcely a little pair of fists present that were not at work, either on behalf of the two first combatants, or



with a view to determine their own private rights in being the first to exercise hospitality towards the amazed poor scholar. The fact was, that while the two largest boys, were arguing the point, about thirty or forty minor disputes all ran parallel to theirs, and their mode of decision was immediately adopted by the pugnacious urchins of the school. In this manner they were engaged, poor Jemmy attempting to tranquillize and separate them, when the master, armed in all his terrors, presented himself.



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With the tact of a sly old disciplinarian, he first secured the door, and instantly commenced the agreeable task of promiscuous castigation. Heavy and vindictive did his arm descend upon those whom he suspected to have cautioned the boy against his rapacity; nor amongst the warm-hearted lads, whom he thwacked so cunningly, was Thady passed over with a tender hand. Springs, bouncings, doublings, blowing of fingers, scratching of heads, and rubbing of elbows—shouts of pain, and doleful exclamations, accompanied by action that displayed surpassing agility—marked the effect with which he plied the instrument of punishment. In the meantime the spirit of reaction, to use a modern phrase, began to set in. The master, while thus engaged in dispensing justice, first received a rather vigorous thwack on the ear from behind, by an anonymous contributor, who gifted him with what is called a musical ear, for it sang during five minutes afterwards. The monarch, when turning round to ascertain the traitor, received another insult on the most indefensible side, and that with a cordiality of manner, that induced him to send his right hand reconnoitring the invaded part. He wheeled round a second time with more alacrity than before; but nothing less than the head of James could have secured him on this occasion. The anonymous contributor sent him a fresh article. This was supported by another kick behind: the turf began to fly; one after another came in contact with his head and shoulders so rapidly, that he found himself, instead of being the assailant, actually placed upon his defence.

[Illustration: PAGE 1099— Received a rather vigorous thwack on the ear]

The insurrection spread, the turf flew more thickly; his subjects closed in upon him in a more compact body; every little fist itched to be at him; the larger boys boldly laid in the facers, punched him in the stomach, I treated him most opprobriously behind, every kick and cuff accompanied by a memento of his cruelty; in short, they compelled him, like Charles the Tenth, ignominiously to fly from his dominions.

On finding the throne vacant, some of them suggested that it ought to be overturned altogether. Thady, however, who was the ringleader of the rebellion, persuaded them to be satisfied with what they had accomplished, and consequently succeeded in preventing them from destroying the fixtures.

Again they surrounded the poor scholar, who, feeling himself the cause of the insurrection, appeared an object of much pity. Such was his grief that he could scarcely reply to them. Their consolation on witnessing his distress was overwhelming. They desired him to think nothing of it; if the master, they told him, should wreak his resentment on him, “be the holy farmer,” they would *pay* (* pay) the masther. Thady’s claim was now undisputed. With only the injury of a black eye, and a lip swelled to the size of a sausage, he walked home in triumph, the poor scholar accompanying him.



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The master, who feared, that this open contempt of his authority, running up, as it did, into a very unpleasant species of retaliation, was something like a signal for him to leave the parish, felt rather more of the penitent the next morning than did any of his pupils. He was by no means displeased, therefore, to see them drop in about the usual hour. They came, however, not one by one, but in compact groups, each officered by two or three of the larger boys; for they feared that, had they entered singly, he might have punished them singly, until his vengeance should be satisfied. It was by bitter and obstinate struggles that they succeeded in repressing their mirth, when he; appeared at his desk with one of his eyes literally closed, and his nose considerably improved in size and richness of color. When they were all assembled, he hemmed several times, and, in a woo-begone tone of voice, split—by a feeble attempt at maintaining authority and suppressing his terrors—into two parts, that jarred most ludicrously, he briefly addressed them as follows:—

“Gintlemen classics, I have been now twenty-six years engaged in the propagation of Latin and Greek litherature, in conjunction wid mathematics, but never, until yesterday, has my influence been spurned; never, until yesterday, have sacrilegious hands been laid upon my person; never, until yesterday, have I been kicked—insidiously, ungallantly, and treacherously kicked—by my own subjects. No, gintlemen,—and, whether I ought to bestow that respectable epithet upon you after yesterday’s proceedings is a matter which admits of dispute,—never before has the lid of my eye been laid drooping, and that in such a manner that I’ must be blind to the conduct of half of my pupils, whether I will or not. You have complained, it appears, of my want of impartiality; but, God knows, you have compelled me to be partial for a week to come. Neither blame me if I may appear to look upon you with scorn for the next fortnight; for I am compelled to turn up my nose at you much against my own inclination. You need never want an illustration of the *naso adunco* of Horace again; I’m a living example of it. That, and the doctrine of projectile forces, have been exemplified in a manner that will prevent me from ever relishing these subjects in future. No king can consider himself properly such until after he has received the oil of consecration; but you, it appears, think differently. You have unkinged me first, and anointed me afterwards; but, I say, no potentate would relish such unction. It smells confoundedly of republicanism. Maybe this is what you understand by the Republic of Letters; but, if it be, I would advise you to change your principles. You treated my ribs as if they were the ribs of a common man; my shins you took liberties with even to excoriation; my head you made a target of, for your hardest turf; and my nose you dishonored to my fage. Was this ginerous? was it discreet?



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was it subordinate? and, above all, was it classical? However, I will show you what greatness of mind is. I will convince you that it is more noble and god-like to forgive an injury, or rather five dozen injuries, than to avenge one; when—hem—yes, I say, when I—I—might so easily avenge it. I now present you with an amnesty: return to your allegiance; but never, while in this seminary, under my tuition, attempt to take the execution of the laws into your own hands. Homerians, come up!”

This address, into which he purposely threw a dash of banter and mock gravity, delivered with the accompaniments of his swelled nose and drooping eye, pacified his audience more readily than a serious one would have done. It was received without any reply or symptom of disrespect, unless the occasional squeak of a suppressed laugh, or the visible shaking of many sides with inward convulsions, might be termed such.

In the course of the day, it is true, their powers of maintaining gravity were put to a severe test, particularly when, while hearing a class, he began to adjust his drooping eye-lid, or coax back his nose into its natural position. On these occasions a sudden pause might be noticed in the business of the class; the boy's voice, who happened to read at the time, would fail him; and, on resuming his sentence by command of the master, its tone was tremulous, and scarcely adequate to the task of repeating the words without his bursting into laughter. The master observed all this clearly enough, but his mind was already made up to take no further notice of what had happened.

All this, however, conduced to render the situation of the poor scholar much more easy, or rather less penal, than it would otherwise have been. Still the innocent lad was on all possible occasions a butt for this miscreant. To miss a word was a pretext for giving him a cruel blow. To arrive two or three minutes later than the appointed hour was certain on his part to be attended with immediate punishment. Jemmy bore it all with silent heroism. He shed no tear—he uttered no remonstrance; but, under the anguish of pain so barbarously inflicted, he occasionally looked round upon his schoolfellows with an I expression of silent entreaty that was seldom lost upon them. Cruel to him the master often was; but to inhuman barbarity the large scholars never permitted him to descend. Whenever any of the wealthier farmers'-sons had neglected their lessons, or deserved chastisement, the mercenary creature substituted a joke for the birch; but as soon as the son of a poor man, or, which was better still, the poor scholar, came before him, he transferred that punishment which the wickedness or idleness of respectable boys deserved, to his or their shoulders. For this outrageous injustice the hard-hearted: old villain had some plausible excuse ready, so that it was in many cases difficult for Jemmy's generous companions to interfere; in his behalf, or parry the sophistry of such: a petty tyrant.



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In this miserable way did he pass over the tedious period of a year, going about every night in rotation with the scholars, and severely beaten on all possible occasions by the master. His conduct and manners won him: the love and esteem of all except his tyrant instructor. His assiduity was remarkable, and his progress in the elements of English and classical literature surprisingly rapid. This added considerably to his character, and procured him additional respect. It was not long before he made himself useful and obliging to all the boys beneath his standing in the school. These services he rendered with an air of such kindness, and a grace so naturally winning, that the attachment of his schoolfellows increased towards him from day to day. Thady was his patron on all occasions: neither did the curate neglect him. The latter was his banker, for the boy had very properly committed his purse to his keeping. At the expiration of every quarter the schoolmaster received the amount of his bill, which he never failed to send in, when due.

Jemmy had not, during his first year's residence in the south, forgotten to request the kind curate's interference with the landlord, on behalf of his father. To be the instrument of restoring his family to their former comfortable holding under Colonel B-----; would have afforded him, without excepting the certainty of his own eventual success, the highest gratification. Of this, however, there was no hope, and nothing remained for him but assiduity in his studies, and patience under the merciless scourge of his teacher. In addition to an engaging person and agreeable manners, nature had gifted him with a high order of intellect, and great powers of acquiring knowledge. The latter he applied to the business before him with indefatigable industry. The school at; which he settled was considered the first in Munster; and the master, notwithstanding his known severity, stood high, and justly so, in the opinion of the people, as an excellent classical and mathematical scholar. Jemmy applied himself to the study of both, and at the expiration of his second year had made such progress that he stood without a rival in the school.

It is usual, as we have said, for the poor scholar to go night after night, in rotation, with his schoolfellows; he is particularly welcome in the houses of those farmers whose children are not so far advanced as himself. It is expected that he should instruct them in the evenings, and enable them, to prepare their lessons for the following day, a task which he always performs with pleasure, because in teaching them he is confirming his own mind in the knowledge which he has previously acquired. Towards the end of the second year, however, he ceased to circulate in this manner. Two or three of the most independent parishioners, whose sons were only commencing their studies, agreed to keep him week about; an arrangement highly convenient to him, as by that means he was



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not so frequently dragged, as he had been, to the remotest parts of the parish. Being an expert penman, he acted also as secretary of grievances to the poor, who frequently employed him to draw up petitions to obdurate landlords, or to their more obdurate agents, and letters to soldiers in all parts of the world, from their anxious and affectionate relations. All these little services he performed kindly and promptly; many a blessing was fervently invoked upon his head; the “good word” and “the prayer” were all they could afford, as they said, “to the bouchal dhas oge * that tuck the world an him for sake o’ the larnin’, an’ that hasn’t the kindliness o’ the mother’s breath an’ the mother’s hand near him, the crathur.”

* The pretty young boy. Boy in Ireland does not always imply youth.

About the middle of the third year he was once more thrown upon the general hospitality of the people. The three farmers with whom he had lived for the preceding six months emigrated to America, as did many others of that class which, in this country, most nearly approximates to the substantial yeomanry of England. The little purse, too, which he had placed in the hands of the kind priest, was exhausted; a season of famine, sickness, and general distress had set in; and the master, on understanding that he was without money, became diabolically savage. In short, the boy’s difficulties increased to a perplexing degree. Even Thady and his grown companions, who usually interposed in his behalf when the master became excessive in correcting him, had left the school, and now the prospect before him was dark and cheerless indeed. For a few months longer, however, he struggled on, meeting every difficulty with meek endurance. From his very boyhood he had revered the sanctity of religion, and was actuated by a strong devotional spirit. He trusted in God, and worshipped Him night and morning with a sincere heart.

At this crisis he was certainly an object of pity; his clothes, which, for some time before had been reduced to tatters, he had replaced by a cast-off coat and small-clothes, a present from his friend the Curate, who never abandoned him. This worthy young man could not afford him money, for as he had but fifty pounds a year, with which to clothe, subsist himself, keep a horse, and pay rent, it was hardly to be expected that his benevolence could be extensive. In addition to this, famine and contagious disease raged with formidable violence in the parish; so that the claims upon his bounty of hundreds who lay huddled together in cold cabins, in out-houses, and even behind ditches, were incessant as well, as heart-rending. The number of interments that took place daily in the parish was awful; nothing could be seen but funerals attended by groups of ragged and emaciated creatures from whose hollow eyes gleamed forth the wolfish fire of famine. The wretched mendicants were countless, and the number of coffins that lay on the public roads—where, attended by the nearest relatives of the

deceased, they had been placed for the purpose of procuring charity—were greater than ever had been remembered by the oldest inhabitant.



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Such was the state of the parish when our poor scholar complained one day in school of severe illness. The early symptoms of the prevailing epidemic were well known; and, on examining more closely into his situation, it was clear that, according to the phraseology of the people, he had “got the faver on his back”—had caught “a heavy load of the faver.” The Irish are particularly apprehensive of contagious maladies. The moment it had been discovered that Jemmy was infected, his schoolfellows avoided him with a feeling of terror scarcely credible, and the inhuman master was delighted at any circumstance, however calamitous, that might afford him a pretext for driving the friendless youth out of the school.

“Take,” said he, “every thing belongin’ to you out of my establishment: you were always a plague to me, but now more so than ever. Be quick, sirra, and nidificate for yourself somewhere else. Do you want to thranslate my siminary into an hospital, and myself into Lazarus, as president? Go off, you wild goose! and conjugate *aegroto* wherever you find a convenient spot to do it in.” The poor boy silently and with difficulty arose, collected his books, and, slinging on his satchel, looked to his schoolfellows, as if he had said, “Which of you will afford me a place where to lay my aching head?” All, however, kept aloof from him; he had caught the contagion, and the contagion, they knew, had swept the people away in vast numbers. At length he spoke. “Is there any boy among you,” he inquired, “who will bring me home? You know I am a stranger, an’ far from my own, God help me!”

This was followed by a profound silence. Not one of those who had so often befriended him, or who would, on any other occasion, share their bed and their last morsel with him, would even touch his person, much less allow him, when thus plague-stricken, to take shelter under their roof. Such are the effects of selfishness, when it is opposed only by the force of those natural qualities that are not elevated into a sense of duty by clear and profound views of Christian truth. It is one thing to perform a kind action from constitutional impulse, and another to perform it as a fixed duty, perhaps contrary to that impulse.

Jemmy, on finding himself avoided like a Hebrew leper of old, silently left the school, and walked on without knowing whither he should ultimately direct his steps. He thought of his friend the priest, but the distance between him and his place of abode was greater, he felt, than his illness would permit him to travel. He walked on, therefore, in such a state of misery as can scarcely be conceived, much less described. His head ached excessively, an intense pain shot like death-pangs through his lower back and loins, his face was flushed, and his head giddy. In this state he proceeded, without money or friends; without a house to shelter him, or a bed on which to lie, far from his own relations, and with the prospect of death,



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under circumstances peculiarly dreadful, before him! He tottered on, however, the earth, as he imagined, reeling under him; the heavens, he thought, streaming with fire, and the earth indistinct and discolored. Home, the paradise of the absent—home, the heaven of the affections—with all its tenderness and blessed sympathies, rushed upon his heart. His father's deep but quiet kindness, his mother's sedulous love; his brothers, all that they had been to him—these, with their thousand heart-stirring associations, started into life before him again and again. But he was now ill, and the mother—Ah! the enduring sense of that mother's love placed her brightest, and strongest, and tenderest, in the far and distant group which his imagination bodied forth.

“Mother!” he exclaimed—“Oh, mother, why—why did I ever lave you? Mother! the son you loved is dyin' without a kind word, lonely and neglected, in a strange land! Oh, my own mother! why did I ever lave you?”

The conflict between his illness and his affections overcame him; he staggered—he grasped as if for assistance at the vacant air—he fell, and lay for some time in a state of insensibility.

The season was then that of midsummer, and early meadows were falling before the scythe. As the boy sank to the earth, a few laborers were eating their scanty dinner of bread and milk so near him, that only a dry low ditch ran between him and them. They had heard his words indistinctly, and one of them was putting the milk bottle to his lips when, attracted by the voice, he looked in the direction of the speaker, and saw him fall. They immediately recognized “the poor scholar,” and in a moment were attempting to recover him.

“Why thin, my poor fellow, what's a shaughran wid you?”

Jemmy started for a moment, looked about him, and asked, “Where am I?”

“Faitha, thin, you're in Rory Connor's field, widin a few perches of the high-road. But what ails you, poor boy? Is it sick you are?”

“It is,” he replied; “I have got the faver. I had to lave school; none o' them would take me home, an' I doubt I must die in a Christian country under the open canopy of heaven. Oh, for God's sake, don't lave me! Bring me to some hospital, or into the next town, where people may know that I'm sick, an' maybe some kind Christian will relieve me.”

The moment he mentioned “faver,” the men involuntarily drew back, after having laid him reclining against the green ditch.



“Thin, thundher an’ turf, what’s to be done?” exclaimed one of them, thrusting his spread fingers into his hair. “Is the poor boy to die widout help among Christyeens like us?”

“But hasn’t he the sickness?” exclaimed another: “an’ in that case, Pether, what’s to be done?”

“Why, you gommoch, isn’t that what I’m wantin’ to know? You wor ever and always an ass, Paddy, except before you wor born, an’ thin you wor like Major M’Curragh, worse nor nothin’. Why the sarra do you be spakin’ about the sickness, the Lord protect us, whin you know I’m so timersome of it?”



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“But considher,” said another, edging off from Jemmy, however, “that he’s a poor scholar, an’ that there’s a great blessin’ to thim that assists the likes of him.”

“Ay, is there that, sure enough, Dan; but you see—blur-an-age, what’s to be done? He can’t die this way, wid nobody wid him but himself.”

“Let us help him!” exclaimed another, “for God’s sake, an’ we won’t be apt to take it thin.”

“Ay, but how can we help him, Frank? Oh, bedad, it ‘ud be a murdherin’ shame, all out, to let the crathur die by himself, widout company, so it would.”

“No one wul take him in, for fraid o’ the sickness. Why, I’ll tell you what we’ll do:—Let us shkame the remainder o’ this day off o’ the Major, an’ build a shed for him on the road-side here, jist against the ditch. It’s as dhry as powdher. Thin we can go through the neighbors, an’ git thim to sit near him time about, an’ to bring him little *dhreeniens* o’ nourishment.”

“Divil a purtier! Come thin, let us get a lot o’ the neighbors, an’ set about it, poor bouchal. Who knows but it may bring down a blessin’ upon us aither in this world or the next.”

“Amin! I pray Gorra! an’ so it will sure I doesn’t the Catechiz say it? ‘There is but one Church,’ says the Catechiz, ‘one Faith, an’ one Baptism.’ Bedad, there’s a power o’ fine larnin’ in the same Catechiz, so there is, an’ mighty improvin’.”

An Irishman never works for wages with half the zeal which he displays when working for love. Ere many hours passed, a number of the neighbors had assembled, and Jemmy found himself on a bunch of clean straw, in a little shed erected for him at the edge of the road.

Perhaps it would be impossible to conceive a more gloomy state of misery than that in which young M’Evoy found himself. Stretched on the side of the public road, in a shed formed of a few loose sticks covered over with “scraws,” that is, the sward of the earth pared into thin stripes—removed above fifty perches from any human habitation—his body racked with a furious and oppressive fever—his mind conscious of all the horrors by which he was surrounded—without the comforts even of a bed or bedclothes—and, what was worst of all, those from whom he might expect kindness, afraid; to approach him! Lying helpless, under these circumstances, it ought not to be wondered at, if he wished that death might at once close his extraordinary sufferings, and terminate those straggles which filial piety had prompted him to encounter.

This certainly is a dark picture, but our humble hero knew that even there the power and goodness of God could support him. The boy trusted in God; and when removed into



his little shed, and stretched upon his clean straw, he felt that his situation was, in good sooth, comfortable when contrasted with what it might have been, if left to perish behind a ditch, exposed to the scorching-heat of the sun by day, and the dews of heaven by night. He felt the hand of God even in this, and placed himself, with a short but fervent prayer, under his fatherly protection.



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Irishmen however, are not just that description of persons who can pursue their usual avocations, and see a fellow-creature die, without such attentions as they can afford him; not precisely so bad as that, gentle reader! Jemmy had not been two hours on his straw, when a second shed much larger than his own, was raised within a dozen yards of it: In this a fire was lit; a small pot was then procured, milk was sent in, and such other little comforts brought together, as they supposed necessary for the sick boy. Having accomplished these matters, a kind of guard was set to watch and nurse-tend him; a pitchfork was got, on the prongs of which they intended to reach him bread across the ditch; and a long-shafted shovel was borrowed, on which to furnish him drink with safety to themselves. That inextinguishable vein of humor, which in Ireland mingles even with death and calamity, was also visible here. The ragged, half-starved creatures laughed heartily at the oddity of their own inventions, and enjoyed the ingenuity with which they made shift to meet the exigencies of the occasion, without in the slightest degree having their sympathy and concern for the afflicted youth lessened.

When their arrangements were completed, one of them (he of the scythe) made a little whey, which, in lieu of a spoon, he stirred with the end of his tobacco-pipe; he then extended it across the ditch upon the shovel, after having put it in a tin porringer.

“Do you want a taste o’ whay, avourneen?”

“Oh, I do,” replied Jemmy; “give me a drink for God’s sake.”

“There it is, *a bouchal*, on the shovel. Musha if myself rightly knows what side you’re lyin’ an, or I’d put it as near your lips as I could. Come, man, be stout, don’t be cast down at all at all; sure, bud-an-age, we’ shovelin’ the way to you, any how.”

“I have it,” replied the boy—“oh, I have it. May God never forget this to you, whoever you are.”

“Faith, if you want to know who I am; I’m Pettier Connor the mower, that never seen to-morrow. Be Gorra, poor boy, you mustn’t let your spirits down at all at all. Sure the neighbors is all bint to watch an’ take care of you.—May I take away the shovel?—an’ they’ve built a brave snug shed here beside yours, where they’ll stay wid you time about until you get well. We’ll feed you wid whay enough, bekase we’ve made up our minds to stale lots o’ sweet milk for you. Ned Branagan an’ I will milk Kody Hartigan’s cows to-night, wid the help o’ God. Divil a bit sin in it, so there isn’t, an’ if there is, too, be my sowl there’s no harm in it any way—for he’s but a nager himself, the same Rody. So, acushla, keep a light heart, for, be Gorra, you’re sure o’ the thin pair o’ throwers, any how. Don’t think you’re deserted—for you’re not. It’s all in regard o’ bein’ afeard o’ this faver, or it’s not this way you’d be; but, as I said a while agone, when you want anything, spake, for you’ll still find two or three of us beside you here, night an’ day. Now, won’t you promise to keep your mind asy, when you know that we’re beside you?”



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“God bless you,” replied Jemmy, “you’ve taken a weight off of my heart. I thought I’d die wid nobody near me at all.”

“Oh, the sorra fear of it. Keep your heart up. We’ll stale lots o’ milk for you. Bad scan to the baste in the parish but we’ll milk, sooner nor you’d want the whay, you crathur you.”

The boy felt relieved, but his malady increased; and were it not that the confidence of being thus watched and attended to supported him, it is more than probable he would have sunk under it.

When the hour of closing the day’s labor arrived, Major ----- came down to inspect the progress which his mowers had made, and the goodness of his crop upon his meadows. No sooner was he perceived at a distance, than the scythes were instantly resumed, and the mowers pursued their employment with an appearance of zeal and honesty that could not be suspected.

On arriving at the meadows, however, he was evidently startled at the miserable day’s work they had performed.

“Why, Connor,” said he, addressing the nurse-tender, “how is this? I protest you have not performed half a day’s labor! This is miserable and shameful.”

“Bedad, Major, it’s throe for your honor, sure enough. It’s a poor day’s work, the I never a doubt of it. But be all the books; that never was opened or shut, busier men! than we wor since mornin’ couldn’t be had; for love or money. You see, Major, these meadows, bad luck to them!—God pardon me for cursin’ the harmless crathurs, for sure ’tisin’t their fau’t, sir: but you see, Major, I’ll insinse you into it. Now look here, your honor. Did you ever see deeper: meadow nor that same, since you war foal—hem—sintce you war born, your honor? Maybe, your honor, Major, ‘ud just take the scythe an’ sthrieve to cut a swaythe?”

“Nonsense, Connor; don’t you know I cannot.”

“Thin, be Gorra, sir, I wish you could; thry it. I’d kiss the book, we did more labor, an’ worked harder this day, nor any day for the last fortnight. If it was light grass, sir—see here, Major, here’s a light bit—now, look at how the scythe runs through it! Thin look at here agin—just observe this, Major—why, murdher alive, don’t you see how slow she goes through that where the grass is heavy! Bedad, Major, you’ll be made up this suson wid your hay, any how. Divil carry the finer meadow ever I put the scythe in nor this same meadow, God bless it!”



“Yes, I see it, Connor; I agree with you as to its goodness. But the reason of that is, Connor, that I always direct my steward myself in laying it down for grass. Yes, you’re right, Connor; if the meadow were light, you could certainly mow comparatively a greater space in a day.”

“Be the livin’ farmer, God pardon me for swearin’, it’s a pleasure to have dalins wid a gintleman like you, that knows things as cute as if you war a mower yourself, your honor. Bedad, I’ll go bail, sir, it wouldn’t be hard to tache you that same.”



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“Why, to tell you the truth, Connor, you have hit me off pretty well. I’m beginning to get a taste for agriculture.”

“But,” said Connor, scratching his head, “won’t your honor allow us the price of a glass, or a pint o’ portlier, for our hard day’s work. Bad cess to me, sir, but this meadow ’ill play the puck wid us afore we get it finished.—Atween ourselves, sir—if it wouldn’t be takin’ freedoms—if you’d look to your own farmin’ yourself. The steward, sir, is a dacent kind of a man; but, sowl, he couldn’t hould a candle to your honor in seein’ to the best way of doin’ a thing, sir. Won’t you allow us glasses apiece, your honor? Faix, we’re kilt entirely, so we are.”

“Here is half-a-crown among you, Connor; but don’t get drunk.”

“Dhrunk! Musha, long may you reign, Sir! Be the scythe in my hand, I’d rather—Och, faix, you’re one o’ the ould sort, sir—the raal Irish gintleman, your honor. An’ sure your name’s far and near for that, any how.”

Connor’s face would have done the heart of Brooke or Cruikshank good, had either of them seen it charged with humor so rich as that which beamed upon it, when the Major left them to enjoy their own comments upon what had happened.

“Oh, be the livin’ farmer,” said Connor, “are we all alive at all afther doin’ the Major! Pp., thin, the curse o’ the crows upon you, pijor, darlin’, but you are a Manus!* The damn’ rip o’ the world, that wouldn’t give the breath he breathes to the poor for God’s sake, and he’ll threwn a man half-a-crown that ‘ll blarney him for farmin’, and him doesn’t know the differ atween a Cork-red a Yellow-leg.”**

* A soft booby easily hoaxed.

**Different kinds of potatoes.

“Faith, he’s the boy that knows how to make a Judy of himself any way, Pether,” exclaimed another. “The divil a hapurt’h asier nor to give these Quality the bag to hould, so there isn’t. An’ they think themselves so cute, too!”

“Augh!” said a third, “couldn’t a man find the soft side o’ them as asy as make out the way to’ his own nose, widout being led to it. Divil a sin it is to do them, any way. Sure, he thinks we wor tooth an’ nail at the meadow all day; an’ me thought I’d never recover it, to see Pether here—the rise he tuck out of him! Ha, ha, ha—och, och, murdher, oh!”

“Faith,” exclaimed Connor, “’twas good, you see, to help the poor scholar; only for it we couldn’t get shkamin’ the half-crown out of him. I think we ought to give the crathur half of it, an’ him so sick: he’ll be wantin’ it worse nor ourselves.”

“Oh, be Gorra, he’s fairly entitled to that. I vote him fifteen pince.”



“Surely!” they exclaimed unanimously. “Tundher-an’-turf! wasn’t he the manes of gettin’ it for us?”

“Jemmy, a bouchal,” said Connor, across the ditch to M’Evoy, “are you sleepin’?”

“Sleepin’! Oh, no,” replied Jemmy; “I’d give the wide world for one wink of asy sleep.”



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“Well, aroon, here’s fifteen pince for you, that we skham—Will I tell him how we cot it?”

“No, don’t,” replied his neighbors; “the boy’s given to devotion, and maybe might scruple to take it.”

“Here’s fifteen pince, avourneen, on the shovel, that we’re givin’ you for God’s sake. If you over * this, won’t you offer up a prayer for us? Won’t you, avick?”

That is—to get over—to survive.

“I can never forget your kindness,” replied Jemmy; “I will always pray for you, and may God for ever bless you and yours!”

“Poor crathur! May the Heavens above have prostration on him! Upon my sowl, it’s good to have his blessin’ an’ his prayer. Now don’t fret, Jemmy; we’re lavin’ you wid a lot o’ neighbors here. They’ll watch you time about, so that whin you want anything, call, avourneen, an’ there’ll still be some one here to answer. God bless you, an’ restore you, till we come wid the milk we’ll stale for you, wid the help o’ God. Bad cess to me, but it ’ud be a mortual sin, so it would, to let the poor boy die at all, an’ him so far from home. For, as the Catechiz says ‘There is but one Faith, one Church, and one Baptism!’ Well, the readin’ that’s in that Catechiz is mighty improvin’, glory be to God!”

It would be utterly impossible to detail the affliction which our poor scholar suffered in this wretched shed, for the space of a fortnight, notwithstanding the efforts of those kind-hearted people to render his situation comfortable.

The little wigwam they had constructed near him was never, even for a moment, during his whole illness, without two or three persons ready to attend him. In the evening their numbers increased; a fire was always kept burning, over which a little pot for making whey or gruel was suspended. At night they amused each other with anecdotes and laughter, and occasionally with songs, when certain that their patient was not asleep. Their exertions to steal milk for him were performed with uncommon glee, and related among themselves with great humor. These thefts would have been unnecessary, had not the famine which then prevailed through the province been so excessive. The crowds that swarmed about the houses of wealthy farmers, supplicating a morsel to keep body and soul together, resembled nothing which our English readers ever had an opportunity of seeing. Ragged, emaciated creatures, tottered about with an expression of wildness and voracity in their gaunt features; fathers and mothers reeled under the burthen of their beloved children, the latter either sick, or literally expiring for want of food; and the widow, in many instances, was compelled to lay down her head to die, with the wail, the feeble wail, of her withered orphans mingling with her last moans! In such a state of things it was difficult to procure a sufficient quantity of milk to allay the natural thirst even of one individual, when parched by the scorching heat of a fever. Notwithstanding this, his wants were for the most part anticipated, so far as their means

would allow them; his shed was kept waterproof; and either shovel or pitchfork always ready to be extended to him, by way of substitution for the right hand of fellowship.



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When he called for anything, the usual observation was, "Husht! the crathur's callin'. I must take the shovel an' see what he wants."

There were times, it is true, when the mirth of the poor fellows was' very low, for hunger was generally among themselves; there were times when their own little shed presented a touching and melancholy spectacle—perhaps we ought also to add, a noble one; for, to contemplate a number of men, considered rude and semi-barbarous, devoting themselves, in the midst of privations the most cutting and oppressive, to the care and preservation of a strange lad, merely because they knew him to be without friends and protection, is to witness a display of virtue truly magnanimous. The food on which some of the persons were occasionally compelled to live, was blood boiled up with a little oatmeal; for when a season of famine occurs in Ireland, the people usually bleed the cows and bullocks to preserve themselves from actual starvation. It is truly a sight of appalling misery to behold feeble women gliding across the country, carrying their cans and pitchers, actually trampling upon fertility, and fatness, and collected in the corner of some grazier's farm waiting, gaunt and ravenous as Ghouls, for their portion of blood. During these melancholy periods of want, everything in the shape of an esculent disappears. The miserable creatures will pick up chicken-weed, nettles, sorrell, bug-loss, preshagh, and sea-weed, which they will boil and eat with the voracity of persons writhing under the united agonies of hunger and death! Yet the very country thus groaning under such a terrible sweep of famine is actually pouring from all her ports a profusion of food, day after day; flinging it from her fertile bosom, with the wanton excess of a prodigal oppressed by abundance.

Despite, however, of all the poor scholar's nurse-guard suffered, he was attended with a fidelity of care and sympathy which no calamity could shake. Nor was this care fruitless; after the fever had passed through its usual stages he began to recover. In fact, it has been observed very truly, that scarcely any person has been known to die under circumstances similar to those of the poor scholar. These sheds, the erection of which is not unfrequent in case of fever, have the advantage of pure free air, by which the patient is cooled and refreshed. Be the cause of it what it may, the fact has been established, and we feel satisfaction in being able to adduce our humble hero as an additional proof of the many recoveries which take place in situations apparently so unfavorable to human life. But how is it possible to detail what M'Evoy suffered during this fortnight of intense agony? Not those who can command the luxuries of life—not those who can reach its comforts—nor those who can supply themselves with its bare necessaries—neither the cotter who struggles to support his wife and helpless children—the mendicant who begs from door to door—nor

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even the felon in his cell—can imagine what he felt in the solitary misery of his feverish bed. Hard is the heart that cannot feel his sorrows, when, stretched beside the common way, without a human face to look on, he called upon the mother whose brain, had she known his situation, would have been riven—whose affectionate heart would have been broken, by the knowledge of his affliction. It was a situation which afterwards appeared to him dark and terrible. The pencil of the painter could not depict it, nor the pen of the poet describe it, except like a dim vision, which neither the heart nor the imagination are able to give to the world as a tale steeped in the sympathies excited by reality.

His whole heart and soul, as he afterwards acknowledged, were, during his trying illness, at home. The voices of his parents, of his sisters, and of his brothers, were always in his ears; their countenances surrounded his cold and lonely shed; their hands touched him; their eyes looked upon him in sorrow—and their tears bedewed him. Even there, the light of his mother's love, though she herself was distant, shone upon his sorrowful couch; and he has declared, that in no past moment of affection did his soul ever burn with a sense of its presence so strongly as it did in the heart-dreams of his severest illness. But God is love, and “temporeth the wind to the shorn lamb.”

Much of all his sufferings would have been alleviated, were it not that his two best friends in the parish, Thady and the curate, had been both prostrated by the fever at the same time with himself. There was consequently no person of respectability in the neighborhood cognizant of his situation. He was left to the humbler class of the peasantry, and honorably did they, with all their errors and ignorance, discharge those duties which greater wealth and greater knowledge would, probably, have left unperformed.

On the morning of the last day he ever intended to spend in the shed, at eleven o'clock he heard the sounds of horses' feet passing along the road, The circumstance was one quite familiar to him; but these horsemen, whoever they might be, stopped, and immediately after, two respectable looking men, dressed in black, approached him. His forlorn state and frightfully wasted appearance startled them, and the younger of the two asked, in a tone of voice which went directly to his heart, how it was that they found him in a situation so desolate.

The kind interest implied by the words, and probably a sense of his utterly destitute state, affected him strongly, and he burst into tears. The strangers looked at each other, then at him; and if looks could express sympathy, theirs expressed it.

“My good boy,” said the first, “how is it that we find you in a situation so deplorable and wretched as this? Who are you, or why is it that you have not a friendly roof I to shelter you?”



“I’m a poor scholar,” replied Jemmy, “the son of honest but reduced parents: I came to this part of the country with the intention of preparing myself for Maynooth and, if it might please God, with the hope of being able to raise them out of their distress.”



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The strangers looked more earnestly at the boy; sickness had touched his fine intellectual features into a purity of expression almost ethereal. His fair skin appeared nearly transparent, and the light of truth and candor lit up his countenance with a lustre which affliction could not dim.

The other stranger approached him more nearly, stooped for a moment, and felt his pulse.

“How long have you been in this country?” he inquired.

“Nearly three years.”

“You have been ill of the fever which is so prevalent; how did you come to be left to the chance of perishing upon the highway?”

“Why, sir, the people were afeard to let me into their houses in consequence of the fever. I got ill in school, sir, but no boy would venture to bring me home, an’ the master turned me out, to die, I believe. May God forgive him!”

“Who was your master, my child?”

“The great’ Mr.-----, sir. If Mr. O’Brien, the curate of the parish, hadn’t been ill himself at the same time, or if Mr. O’Rorke’s son, Thady, hadn’t been laid on his back, too, sir, I wouldn’t suffer what I did.”

“Has the curate been kind to you?”

“Sir, only for him and the big boys I couldn’t stay in the school, on account of the master’s cruelty, particularly since my money was out.”

“You are better now—are you not?” said the other gentleman.

“Thank God, sir!—oh, thanks be to the Almighty, I am! I expect to be able to lave this place to-day or to-morrow.”

“And where do you intend to go when you recover?”

The boy himself had not thought of this, and the question came on him so unexpectedly, that he could only reply—

“Indeed, sir, I don’t know.”



“Had you,” inquired the second stranger, “testimonials from your parish priest?”

“I had, sir: they are in the hands of Mr. O’Brien. I also had a character from my father’s landlord.”

“But how,” asked the other, “have you existed here during your illness? Have you been long sick?”

“Indeed I can’t tell you, sir, for I don’t know how the time passed at all; but I know, sir, that there were always two or three people attendin’ me. They sent me whatever they thought I wanted, upon a shovel or a pitchfork, across the ditch, because they were afraid to come near me.”

During the early part of the dialogue, two or three old hats, or caubeens, might have been seen moving steadily over from the wigwam to the ditch which ran beside the shed occupied by M’Evoy. Here they remained stationary, for those who wore them were now within hearing of the conversation, and ready to give their convalescent patient a good word, should it be necessary.

“How were you supplied with drink and medicine?” asked the younger stranger.

“As I’ve just told you, sir,” replied Jemmy; “the neighbors here let me want for nothing that they had. They kept me in more whey than I could use; and they got me medicine, too, some way or other. But indeed, sir, during a great part of the time I was ill, I can’t say how they attended me: I wasn’t insensible, sir, of what was goin’ on about me.”



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One of those who lay behind the ditch now arose, and after a few hems and scratchings of the head, ventured to join in the conversation.

“Pray have you, my man,” said the elder of the two, “been acquainted with the circumstances of this boy’s illness?”

“Is it the poor scholar, my Lord?* Oh thin bedad it’s myself that has that. The poor crathur was in a terrible way all out, so he was. He caught the faver in the school beyant, one day, an’ was turned out by the nager o’ the world that he was larnin’ from.”

* The peasantry always address a Roman Catholic Bishop as “My Lord.”

“Are you one of the persons who attended him?”

“Och, och, the crathar! what could unsignified people like us do for him, barrin’ a thrifle? Any how, my Lord, it’s the meracle o’ the world that he was ever able to over it at all. Why, sir, good luck to the one of him but suffered as much, wid the help o’ God, as ’ud overcome fifty men!”

“How did you provide him with drink at such a distance from any human habitation?”

“Throth, hard enough we found it, sir, to do that same: but sure, whether or not, my Lord, we couldn’t be sich nagers as to let him die all out, for want o’ sometlrm’ to moisten his throath wid.”

“I hope,” inquired the other, “you had nothing to do in the milk-stealing which has produced such an outcry in this immediate neighborhood?”

“Milk-stalin’! Oh, bedad, sir, there never was the likes known afore in the cauntry. The Lord forgive them, that did it! Be gorra, sir, the wickedness o’ the people’: mighty improving if one ’ud take warnin’ by it, glory be to God!”

“Many of the fanners’ cows have been milked at night, Connor—perfectly drained. Even my own cows have not escaped; and we who have suffered are certainly determined, if possible, to ascertain those who have committed the theft. I, for my part, have gone even beyond my ability in relieving the wants of the poor, during this period of sickness and famine; I therefore deserved this the less.”

“By the powdbers, your honor, if any gintleman desarved to have his cows *unmilked*, it’s yourself. But, as I said this minute, there’s no end to the wickedness o’ the people, so there’s not, although the Catechiz is against them; for, says it, ‘there is but one Faith, one Church, an’ one Baptism.’ Now, sir, isn’t it quare that people, wid sich words in the book afore them, won’t be guided by it? I suppose they thought it only a *white* sin, sir, to take the milk, the thieves o’ the world.”



“Maybe, your honor,” said another, “that it was only to keep the life in some poor sick crathur that wanted it more nor you or the farmers, that they did it. There’s some o’ the same farmers deserve worse, for they’re keepin’ up the prices o’ their male and praties upon the poor, an’ did so all along, that they might make money by our outlier destitution.”

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“That is no justification for theft,” observed the graver of the two. “Does any one among you suspect those who committed it in this instance? If you do, I command you, as your Bishop, to mention them.”

“How, for instance,” added the other, “were you able to supply this sick boy with whey during his illness?”

“Oh thin, gintlemen,” replied Connor, dexterously parrying the question, “but it’s a mighty improvin’ thing to see our own Bishop,—God spare his Lordship to us!—an the Protestant minister o’ the parish joinin’ together to relieve an’ give good advice to the poor! Bedad, it’s settin’ a fine example, so it is, to the Quality, if they’d take pattern by it.”

“Reply,” said the Bishop, rather sternly, “to the questions we have asked you.”

“The quistions, your Lordship? It’s proud an’ happy we’d be to do what you want; but the sarra man among us can do it, barin’ we’d say what we ought not to say. That’s the thruth, my Lord; an’ surely ’tisin’t your Gracious Reverence that ’ud want us to go beyant that?”

“Certainly not,” replied the Bishop. “I warn you both against falsehood and fraud; two charges which might frequently be brought against you in your intercourse with the gentry of the country, whom you seldom scruple to deceive and mislead, by gliding into a character, when speaking to them, that is often the reverse of your real one; whilst at the same time you are both honest and sincere to persons of your own class. Put away this practice, for it is both sinful and discreditable.”

“God bless your Lordship! an’ many thanks to your Gracious Reverence for advisin’ us! Well we know that it’s the blessed thing to folly your words.”

“Bring over that naked, starved-looking man, who is stirring the fire under that pot,” said the Hector. “He looks like Famine itself.”

“Paddy Dunn! will you come over here to his honor, Paddy! He’s goin’ to give you somethin’,” said Connor, adding of his own accord the last clause of his message.

The tattered creature approached him with a gleam of expectation in his eyes that appeared like insanity.

“God bless your honor for your goodness,” exclaimed Paddy. “It’s me that’s in it, sir!—Paddy Dunn, sir, sure enough; but, indeed, I’m the next thing to my own ghost, sir, now God help me!”

“What, and for whom are you cooking?”



“Jist the smallest dhrop in life, sir, o’ gruel, to keep the sowl in that lonely crathur, sir, the poor scholar.”

“Pray how long is it since you have eaten anything yourself?”

The tears burst from the eyes of the miserable creature as he replied—

“Before God in glory, your honor, an’ in the presence of his Lordship here, I only got about what ’ud make betther nor half a male widin the last day, sir. ‘Twas a weeshy grain o’ male that I got from a friend; an’ as Ned Connor here tauld me that this crathur had nothin’ to make the gruel for him, why I shared it wid him, bekase he couldn’t even beg it, sir, if he wanted it, an’ him not able to walk yit.”

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The worthy pastor's eyes glistened with a moisture that did him honor. Without a word of observation, he slipped a crown into the hand of Dunn, who looked at it as if he had been paralyzed.

"Oh thin," said he, fervently, "may every hair on your honor's head become a mould-candle to light you into glory! The world's goodness is in your heart, sir; an' may all the blessin's of Heaven rain down upon you an' yours!"

The two gentlemen then gave assistance to the poor scholar, whom the Bishop addressed in kind and encouraging language:

"Come to me, my good boy," he added, "and if, on further inquiry, I find that your conduct has been such as I believe it to have been, you may rest assured, provided also you continue worthy of my good opinion, that I shall be a friend and protector to you. Call on me when you got well, and I will speak to you at greater length."

"Well," observed Connor, when they were gone, "the divil's own hard puzzle the Bishop had me in, about stalin' the milk. It went agin' the grain wid me to tell him the lie, so I had to invint a bit o' truth to keep my conscience clear; for sure there was not a man among us that could tell him, barrin' we said that we oughtn't to say. Doesn't all the world know that a man oughtn't to condimn himself? That was thruth, any way; but divil a scruple I'd have in blammin' the other—not but that he's one o' the best of his sort. Paddy Dunn, quit lookin' at that crown, but get the shovel an' give the boy his dhrink—he's wantin' it."

The agitation of spirits produced by Jemmy's cheering interview with the Bishop was, for three days afterwards, somewhat prejudicial to his convalescence. In less than a week, however, he was comfortably settled with Mr. O'Rorke's family, whose kindness proved to him quite as warm as he had expected.

When he had remained with them a few days, he resolved to recommence his studies under his tyrant master. He certainly knew that his future attendance at the school would be penal to him, but he had always looked forward to the accomplishment of his hopes as a task of difficulty and distress. The severity to be expected from the master could not, he thought, be greater than that which he had already suffered; he therefore decided, if possible, to complete his education under him.

The school, when Jemmy appeared in it, had been for more than an hour assembled, but the thinness of the attendance not only proved the woful prevalence of sickness and distress in the parish, but sharpened the pedagogue's vinegar aspect into an expression of countenance singularly peevish and gloomy. When the lad entered, a murmur of pleasure and welcome ran through the scholars, and joy beamed forth from every countenance but that of his teacher. When the latter noticed this, his irritability rose above restraint, and he exclaimed:—



“Silence! and apply to business, or I shall cause some of you to denude immediately. No school ever can prosper in which that *hirudo*, called a poor scholar, is permitted toleration. I thought, sarra, I told you to nidificate and hatch your wild project under some other wing than mine.”



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“I only entrate you,” replied our poor hero, “to suffer me to join the class I left while I was sick, for about another year. I’ll be very quiet and humble, and, as far as I can, will do everything you wish me.”

“Ah! you are a crawling reptile,” replied the savage, “and, in my opinion, nothing but a chate and impostor. I think you have imposed yourself upon Mr. O’Brien for what you are not; that is, the son of an honest man. I have no doubt, but many of your nearest relations died after having seen their own funerals. Your mother, you runagate, wasn’t your father’s wife, I’ll be bail.”

The spirit of the boy could bear this no longer; his eyes flashed, and his sinews stood out in the energy of deep indignation.

“It is false,” he exclaimed; “it is as false as your own cruel and cowardly heart, you wicked and unprincipled tyrant! In everything you have said of my father, mother, and friends, and of myself, too, you are’ a liar, from the hat on your head to the dirt under your feet—a liar, a coward, and a villain!”

The fury of the miscreant was ungovernable:—he ran at the still feeble lad, and, by a stroke of his fist, dashed him senseless to the earth. There were now no large boys in the school to curb his resentment, he therefore kicked him in the back when he fell. Many voices exclaimed in alarm—“Oh, masther! sir; don’t kill him! Oh, sir! dear, don’t kill him! Don’t kill poor Jemmy, sir, an’ him still sick!”

“Kill him!” replied the master; “kill him, indeed! Faith, he’d be no common man who could kill him; he has as many lives in him as a cat! Sure, he can live behind a ditch, wid the faver on his back, wid-out dying; and he would live if he was stuck on the spire of a steeple.”

In the meantime the boy gave no symptoms of returning life, and the master, after desiring a few of the scholars to bring him oat to the air, became pale as death with apprehension. He immediately withdrew to his private apartment, which joined the schoolroom, and sent out his wife to assist in restoring him to animation. With some difficulty this was accomplished. The unhappy boy at once remembered what had just occurred; and the bitter tears gushed from his eyes, as he knelt down, and exclaimed “Merciful Father of heaven and earth, have pity on me! You see my heart, great God! and that what I did, I did for the best!”

“Avourneen,” said the woman, “he’s passionate, an’ never mind him. Come in an’ beg his pardon for callin’ him a liar, an’ I’ll become spokesman for you myself. Come, acushla, an’ I’ll get lave for you to stay in the school still.”

“Oh, I’m hurted!” said the poor youth: “I’m hurted inwardly—somewhere about the back, and about my ribs!” The pain he felt brought the tears down his pale cheeks. “I wish I

was at home!” said he. “I’ll give up all and go home!” The lonely boy then laid his head upon his hands, as he sat on the ground, and indulged in a long burst of sorrow.



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“Well,” said a manly-looking little fellow, whilst the tears stood in his eyes, “I’ll tell my father this, anyhow. I know he won’t let me come to this school any more. Here, Jemmy, is a piece of my bread, maybe it will do you good.”

“I couldn’t taste it, Frank dear,” said Jemmy; “God bless you; but I couldn’t taste it.”

“Do,” said Frank; “maybe it will bate back the pain.”

“Don’t ask me, Frank dear,” said Jemmy; “I couldn’t ate it: I’m hurted inwardly.”

“Bad luck to me!” exclaimed the indignant boy, “if ever my ten toes will darken this school door agin. By the livin’ farmer, if they ax me at home to do it, I’ll run away to my uncle’s, so I will. Wait, Jemmy, I’ll be big yit; an’, be the blessed Gospel that’s about my neck, I’ll give the same masther a shirtful of sore bones, the holy an’ blessed minute I’m able to do it.”

Many of the other boys declared that they would acquaint their friends with the master’s cruelty to the poor scholar; but Jemmy requested them not to do so, and said that he was determined to return home the moment he should be able to travel.

The affrighted woman could not prevail upon him to seek a reconciliation with her husband, although the expressions of the other scholars induced her to press him to it, even to entreaty. Jemmy arose, and with considerable difficulty reached the Curate’s house, found him at home, and, with tears in his eyes, related to him the atrocious conduct of the master.

“Very well,” said this excellent man, “I am glad that I can venture to ride as far as Colonel B-----’s to-morrow. You must accompany me; for decidedly such brutality cannot be permitted to go unpunished.”

Jemmy knew that the curate was his friend; and although he would not himself have thought of summoning the master to answer for his barbarity, yet he acquiesced in the curate’s opinion. He stopped that night in the house of the worthy man to whom Mr. O’Brien had recommended him on his first entering the town. It appeared in the morning, however, that he was unable to walk; the blows which he had received were then felt by him to be more dangerous than had been supposed. Mr. O’Brien, on being informed of this, procured a jaunting-car, on which they both sat, and at an easy pace reached the Colonel’s residence.

The curate was shown into an ante-room, and Jemmy sat in the hall: the Colonel joined the former in a few minutes. He had been in England and on the continent, accompanied by his family, for nearly the last three years, but had just returned, in order



to take possession of a large property in land and money, to which he succeeded at a very critical moment, for his own estates were heavily encumbered. He was now proprietor of an additional estate, the rent-roll of which was six thousand per annum, and also master of eighty-five thousand pounds in the funds. Mr. O'Brien, after congratulating him upon his good fortune, introduced the case of our hero as one which, in his opinion, called for the Colonel's interposition as a magistrate.



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"I have applied to you, sir," he proceeded, "rather than to any other of the neighboring gentlemen, because I think this friendless lad has a peculiar claim upon any good offices you could render him."

"A claim upon me! How is that, Mr. O'Brien?"

"The boy, sir, is not a native of this province. His father was formerly a tenant of yours, a man, as I have reason to believe, remarkable for good conduct and industry. It appears that his circumstances, so long as he was your tenant, were those of a comfortable independent farmer. If the story which his son relates be true—and I, for one, believe it—his family have been dealt with in a manner unusually cruel and iniquitous. Your present agent, Colonel, who is known in his own neighborhood by the nickname of Yellow Sam, thrust him out of his farm, when his wife was sick, for the purpose of putting into it a man who had married his illegitimate daughter. If this be found a correct account of the transaction, I have no hesitation in saying, that you, Colonel B-----, as a gentleman of honor and humanity, will investigate the conduct of your agent, and see justice done to an honest man, who must have been oppressed in your name, and under color of your authority."

"If my agent has dared to be unjust to a worthy tenant," said the Colonel, "in order to provide for his bastard, by my sacred honor, he shall cease to be an agent of mine! I admit, certainly, that from some circumstances which transpired a few years ago, I have reason to suspect his integrity. That, to be sure, was only so far as he and I were concerned; but, on the other hand, during one or two visits I made to the estate which he manages, I heard the tenants thank and praise him with much gratitude, and all that sort of thing. There was 'Thank your honor!'—'Long may you reign over us, sir!'—and, 'Oh, Colonel, you've a mighty good man to your agent!' and so forth. I do not think, Mr. O'Brien, that he has acted so harshly, or that he would dare to do it. Upon my honor, I heard those warm expressions of gratitude from the lips of the tenants themselves."

"If you knew the people in general, Colonel, as well as I do," replied the curate, "you would admit, that such expressions are often either cuttingly ironical, or the result of fear. You will always find, sir, that the independent portion of the people have least of this forced dissimulation among them. A dishonest and inhuman agent has in his own hands the irresponsible power of harassing and oppressing the tenantry under him. The class most hateful to the people are those low wretches who spring up from nothing into wealth, accumulated by dishonesty and rapacity. They are proud, overbearing, and jealous, even to vindictiveness, of the least want of respect. It is to such upstarts that the poorer classes are externally most civil; but it is also such persons whom they most hate and abhor. They flatter them to their faces, 'tis true even to nausea; but they seldom spare them in their absence. Of this very class, I believe, is your agent, Yellow Sam; so that any favorable expressions you may have heard from your tenantry towards him, were most probably the result of dissimulation and fear. Besides, sir, here

is a testimonial from M'Evoy's parish priest, in which his father is spoken of as an honest, moral, and industrious man."



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“If what you say, Mr. O’Brien, be correct,” observed the Colonel, “you know the Irish peasantry much better than I do. Decidedly, I have always thought them in conversation exceedingly candid and sincere. With respect to testimonials from priests to landlords in behalf of their tenants, upon my honor I am sick of them. I actually received, about four years ago, such an excellent character of two tenants, as induced me to suppose them worthy of encouragement. But what was the fact? Why, sir, they were two of the greatest firebrands on my estate, and put both me and my agent to great trouble and expense. No, sir, I wouldn’t give a curse for a priest’s testimonial upon such an occasion. These fellows were subsequently convicted of arson on the clearest evidence, and transported.”

“Well, sir, I grant that you may have been misled in that instance. However, from what I’ve observed, the two great faults of Irish landlords are these:—In the first place, they suffer themselves to remain ignorant of their tenantry; so much so, indeed, that they frequently deny them access and redress when the poor people are anxious to acquaint them with their grievances; for it is usual with landlords to refer them to those very agents against whose cruelty and rapacity they are appealing. This is a *carte blanche* to the agent to trample upon them if he pleases. In the next place, Irish landlords too frequently employ ignorant and needy men to manage their estates; men who have no character, no property, or standing in society, beyond the reputation of being keen shrewd, and active. These persons, sir, make fortunes; and what means can they have of accumulating wealth, except by cheating either the landlord or his tenants, or both? A history of their conduct would be a black catalogue of dishonesty, oppression, and treachery. Respectable men, resident on or near the estate, possessing both character and property, should always be selected for this important trust. But, above all things, the curse of a tenantry is a percentage agent. He racks, and drives, and oppresses, without consideration either of market or produce, in order that his receipts may be ample, and his own income large.”

“Why, O’Brien, you appear to be better acquainted with all this sort of thing than I, who am a landed proprietor.”

“By the by, sir, without meaning you any disrespect, it is the landlords of Ireland who know least about the great mass of its inhabitants; and I might also add, about its history, its literature, the manners of the people, their customs, and their prejudices. The peasantry know this, and too often practise upon their ignorance. There is a landlord’s *Vade mecum* sadly wanted in Ireland, Colonel.”

“Ah! very good, O’Brien, very good! Well, I shall certainly inquire into this case, and if I find that Yellow Ham has been playing the oppressor, out he goes. I am now able to manage him, which I could not readily do before, for, by the by, he had mortgages on my property.”



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“I would take it, Colonel, as a personal favor, if you would investigate the transaction I have mentioned.”

“Undoubtedly I shall, and that very soon. But about this outrage committed against the boy himself? We had better take his informations, and punish the follow.”

“Certainly; I think that is the best way. His conduct to the poor youth has been merciless and detestable. We must put him out of this part of the country.”

“Call the lad in. In this case I shall draw up the informations myself, although Gregg usually does that.”

Jemmy, assisted by the curate, entered the room, and the humane Colonel desired him, as he appeared ill, to sit down.

“What is your name?” asked the Colonel.

“James M’Evoy,” he replied. “I’m the son, sir, of a man who was once a tenant of yours.”

“Ay! and pray how did he cease to be a tenant of mine?”

“Why, sir, your agent, Yallow Sam, put him out of our farm, when my poor mother was on her sick-bed. He chated my father, sir, out of some money—part of our rent it was, that he didn’t give him a receipt for. When my father went to him afterwards for the receipt, Yallow Sam abused him, and called him a rogue, and that, sir, was what no man ever called my father either before or since. My father, sir, threatened to tell you about it, and you came to the country soon after; but Yallow Sam got very great wid my father at that time, and sent him to sell bullocks for him about fifty miles off, but when he come back again, you had left the country. Thin, sir, Yallow Sam said nothing till the next half-year’s rent became due, whin he came down on my father for all—that is, what he hadn’t got the receipt for, and the other gale—and, without any warning in the world, put him out. My father offered to pay all; but he said he was a rogue, and that you had ordered him off the estate. In less than a week after this he put a man that married a bastard daughter of his own into our house and place. That’s God’s truth, sir; and you’ll find it so, if you inquire into it. It’s a common trick of his to keep back receipts, and make the tenants pay double.”*

* This is the fact. The individual here alluded to, frequently kept back receipts when receiving rents, under pretence of hurry, and afterwards compelled the tenants to pay the same gale twice!

“Sacred Heaven, O’Brien! can this be possible?”

“Your best way, Colonel, is to inquire into it.”



“Was not your father able to educate you at home, my boy?”

“No, sir. We soon got into poverty after we left your farm; and another thing, sir, there was no Latin school in our neighborhood.”

“For what purpose did you become a poor scholar?”

“Why, sir, I hoped one day or other to be able to raise my father and mother out of the distress that Yallow Sam brought on us.”

“By Heaven! a noble aim, and a noble sentiment. And what has this d—d fellow of a schoolmaster done to you?”



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“Why, sir, yesterday, when I went back to the school, he abused me, and said that he supposed that most of my relations were hanged; spoke ill of my father; and said that my mother”—Here the tears started to his eyes—he sobbed aloud.

“Go on, and be cool,” said the Colonel. “What did he say of your mother?”

“He said, sir, that she was never married to my father. I know I was wrong, sir; but if it was the king on his throne that said it of my mother, I’d call him a liar. I called him a liar, and a coward, and a villain: ay, sir, and if I had been able, I would have tramped him under my feet.”

The Colonel looked steadily at him, but the open clear eye which the boy turned upon him was full of truth and independence. “And you will find,” said the soldier, “that this spirited defence of your mother will be the most fortunate action of your life. Well; he struck you then, did he?”

“He knocked me down, sir, with his fist—then kicked me in the back and sides. I think some of my ribs are broke.”

“Ay!—no doubt, no doubt,” said the Colonel. “And you were only after recovering from this fever which is so prevalent?”

“I wasn’t a week out of it, sir.”

“Well, my boy, we shall punish him for you.”

“Sir, would you hear me for a word or two, if it would be pleasing to you?”

“Speak on,” said the Colonel.

“I would rather change his punishment to—I would—that is—if it would be agreeable to you—It’s this, sir—I wouldn’t trouble you now against the master, if you’d be pleased to rightify my father, and punish Yallow Sam. Oh, sir, for God’s sake, put my heart-broken father into his farm again! If you would, sir, I could shed my blood, or lay down my life for you, or for any belonging to you. I’m but a poor boy, sir, low and humble; but they say there’s a greater Being than the greatest in this world, that listens to the just prayers of the poor and friendless. I was never happy, sir, since we left it—neither was any of us; and when we’d sit cowl’d and hungry, about our hearth, We used to be talking of the pleasant days we spent in it, till the tears would be smothered in curses against him that put us out of it. Oh, sir, if you could know all that a poor and honest family suffers, when they are thrown into distress by want of feeling in their landlords, or by the dishonesty of agents, you would consider my father’s case. I’m his favorite son, sir, and good right have I to speak for him. If you could know the sorrow, the misery, the drooping down of the spirits, that lies upon the countenances and the hearts of such people, you wouldn’t, as a man and a Christian, think it below you to spread happiness and contentment

among them again. In the morning they rise to a day of hardship, no matter how bright and cheerful it may be to others—nor is there any hope of a brighter day for them: and at night they go to their hard beds to strive to sleep away their



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hunger in spite of cold and want. If you could see how the father of a family, after striving to bear up, sinks down at last; if you could see the look he gives at the children that he would lay down his heart's blood for, when they sit naked and hungry about him; and the mother, too, with her kind word and sorrowful smile, proud of them in all their destitution, but her heart breaking silent! All the time, her face wasting away. Her eye dim, and her strength gone—Sir, make one such family happy—for all this has been in my father's house! Give us back our light spirits, our pleasant days, and our cheerful hearts again! We lost them through the villainy of your agent. Give them back to us, for you can do it; but you can never pay us for what we suffered. Give us, sir, our farm, our green fields, our house, and every spot and nook that we had before. We love the place, sir, for its own sake;—it is the place of our fathers, and our hearts are in it. I often think I see the smooth river that runs through it, and the meadows that I played in when I was a child;—the glen behind our house, the mountains that rose before us when we left the door, the thorn-bush at the garden, the hazels in the glen, the little beach-green beside the river—Oh, sir, don't blame me for crying, for they are all before my eyes, in my ears, and in my heart! Many a summer evening have I gone to the march-ditch of the farm that my father's now in, and looked at the place I loved, till the tears blinded me, and I asked it as a favor of God to restore us to it! Sir, we are in great poverty at home; before God we are; and my father's heart is breaking.”

The Colonel drew his breath deeply, rubbed his hands, and as he looked at the fine countenance of the boy—expressing, as it did, enthusiasm and sorrow—his eye lightened with a gleam of indignation. It could not be against the poor scholar; no, gentle reader, but against his own agent.

“O'Brien,” said he, “what do you think, and this noble boy is the son of a man who belongs to a class of which I am ignorant! By Heaven, we landlords are, I fear, a guilty race.”

“Not all, sir,” replied the Curate. “There are noble exceptions among them; their faults are more the faults of omission than commission.”

“Well, well, no matter. Come, I will draw up the informations against this man; afterwards I have something to say to you, my boy,” he added, addressing Jemmy, “that will not, I trust, be unpleasant.”

He then drew up the informations as strongly as he could word them, after which Jemmy deposed to their truth and accuracy, and the Colonel, rubbing his hands again, said—

“I will have the fellow secured. When you go into town, Mr. O'Brien, I'll thank you to call on Meares, and hand him these. He will lodge the miscreant in limbo this very night.”

Jemmy then thanked him, and was about to withdraw, when the Colonel desired him to remain a little longer.



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“Now,” said he, “your father has been treated inhumanly, I believe; but no matter. That is not the question. Your sentiments, and conduct, and your affection for your parents, are noble, my boy. At present, I say, the question is not whether the history of your father’s wrongs be true or false; you, at least, believe it to be true. From this forward—but by the by, I forgot; how could your becoming a poor scholar relieve your parents?”

“I intended to become a priest, sir, and then to help them.”

“Ay! so I thought; and, provided your father were restored to the farm, would you be still disposed to become a priest?”

“I would, sir; next to helping my father, that is what I wish to be.”

“O’Brien, what would it cost to prepare him respectably for the priesthood?—I mean to defray his expenses until he completes his preparatory education, in the first place, and afterwards during his residence in Maynooth?”

“I think two hundred pounds, sir, would do it easily and respectably.”

“I do not think it would. However, do you send him—but first let me ask what progress he has already made?”

“He has read—in fact he is nearly prepared to enter Maynooth. His progress has been very rapid.”

“Put him to some respectable boarding-school for a year; then let him enter Maynooth, and I will bear the expense. But remember I do not adopt this course in consequence of his father’s history. Not I, by Jupiter; I do it on his own account. He is a noble boy, and full of fine qualities, if they be not nipped by neglect and poverty. I loved my father myself, and fought a duel on his account; and I honor the son who has spirit to defend his absent parent.”

“This is a most surprising turn in the boy’s fortunes, Colonel.”

“He deserves it. A soldier, Mr. O’Brien, is not without his enthusiasm, nor can he help admiring it in others, when nobly and virtuously directed. To see a boy in the midst of poverty, encountering the hardships and difficulties of life, with the hope of raising up his parents from distress to independence, has a touch of sublimity in it.”

“Ireland, Colonel, abounds with instances of similar virtue, brought out, probably, into fuller life and vigor by the sad changes and depressions which are weighing down the people. In her glens, on her bleak mountain sides, and in her remotest plains, such examples of pure affection, uncommon energy, and humble heroism, are to be seen; but, unfortunately, few persons of rank or observation mingle with the Irish people, and their many admirable qualities pass away without being recorded in the literature of their



country. They are certainly a strange people, Colonel, almost an anomaly in the history of the human race. They are the only people who can rush out from the very virtues of private life to the perpetration of crimes at which we shudder. There is, to be sure, an outcry about their oppression; but that is wrong. Their indigence and ignorance are rather the result of neglect;—of neglect, sir, from the government of the country—from the earl to the squireen. They have been taught little that is suitable to their stations and duties in life, either as tenants who cultivate our lands, or as members of moral or Christian society.”



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“Well, well: I believe what you say is too true. But touching the records of virtue in human life, pray who would record it when nothing goes down now-a-days but what is either monstrous or fashionable?”

“Very true, Colonel; yet in my humble opinion, a virtuous Irish peasant is far from being so low a character as a profligate man of rank.”

“Well, well, well! Come, O’Brien, we will drop the subject. In the meantime, touching this boy, as I said, he must be looked to, for he has that in him which ought not to be neglected. We shall now see that this d—d pedagogue be punished for his cruelty.” The worthy Colonel in a short time dismissed poor Jemmy with an exulting heart; but not until he had placed a sufficient sum in the Curate’s hands for enabling him to make a respectable appearance. Medical advice was also procured for him, by which he sooner overcame the effects of his master’s brutality.

On their way home Jemmy related to his friend the conversation which he had had with his Bishop in the shed, and the kind interest which that gentleman had taken in his situation and prospects. Mr. O’Brien told him that the Bishop was an excellent man, possessing much discrimination and benevolence; “and so,” said he, “is the Protestant clergyman who accompanied him. They have both gone among the people during this heavy visitation of disease and famine, administering advice and assistance; restraining them from those excesses which they sometimes commit, when, driven by hunger, they attack provision-carts, bakers’ shops, or the houses of farmers who are known to possess a stock of meal or potatoes. God knows, it is an excusable kind of robbery; yet it is right to restrain them.”

“It is a pleasant thing, sir, to see clergymen of every religion working together to make the people happy.”

“It is certainly so,” replied the curate; “and I am bound to say, in justice to the Protestant clergy, that there is no class of men in Ireland, James, who do so much good without distinction of creed or party. They are generally kind and charitable to the poor; so are their wives and daughters. I have often known them to cheer the sick-bed—to assist the widow and the orphan—to advise and admonish the profligate, and, in some instances, even to reclaim them. But now about your own prospects; I think you should go and see your family as soon as your health permits you.”

“I would give my right hand,” replied Jemmy, “just to see them, if it was only for five minutes: but I cannot go. I vowed that I would never enter my native parish until I should become a Catholic clergyman. I vowed that, sir, to God—and with his assistance I will keep my vow.”

“Well,” said the curate, “you are right. And now let me give you a little advice. In the first place, learn to speak as correctly as you can; lay aside the vulgarisms of



conversation peculiar to the common people; and speak precisely as you would write. By the by, you acquitted yourself to admiration with the Colonel. A little stumbling there was in the beginning; but you got over it. You see, James, the force of truth and simplicity. I could scarcely restrain my tears while you spoke.”

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“If I had not been in earnest, sir, I could never have spoken as I did.”

“You never could. Truth, James, is the foundation of all eloquence; he who knowingly speaks what is not true, may dazzle and perplex; but he will never touch with that power and pathos which spring from truth. Fiction is successful only by borrowing her habiliments. Now, James, for a little more advice. Don’t let the idea of having been a poor scholar deprive you of self-respect; neither let your unexpected turn of fortune cause you to forget what you have suffered. Hold a middle course; be firm and independent; without servility on the one hand, or vanity on the other. You have also too much good sense, and, I hope, too much religion, to ascribe what this day has brought forth in your behalf, to any other cause than God. It has pleased him to raise you from misery to ease and comfort; to him, therefore, be it referred, and to him be your thanks and prayers directed. You owe him much, for you now can perceive the value of what he has done for you! May his name be blessed!”

Jemmy was deeply affected by the kindness of his friend, for such, in friendship’s truest sense, was he to him. He expressed, the obligations which he owed him, and promised to follow the excellent advice he had just received.

The schoolmaster’s conduct to the poor scholar had, before the close of the day on which it occurred, been known through the parish. Thady O’Rorke, who had but just recovered from the epidemic, felt so bitterly exasperated at the outrage, that he brought his father to the parish priest, to whom he give a detailed account of all that our hero and the poorer children of the school had suffered. In addition to this, he went among the more substantial farmers of the neighborhood, whose cooperation he succeeded in obtaining, for the laudable purpose of driving the tyrant out of the parish.

Jemmy, who still lived at the “House of Entertainment,” on hearing what they intended to do, begged Mr. O’Brien, to allow him, provided the master should be removed from the school, to decline prosecuting him. “He has been cruel to me, no doubt,” he added; “still I cannot forget that his cruelty has been the means of changing my condition in life so much for the better. If he is put out of the parish it will be punishment enough; and, to say the truth, sir, I can now forgive everybody. Maybe, had I been still neglected I might punish him; but, in the meantime, to show him and the world that I didn’t deserve his severity, I forgive him.”

Mr. O’Brien was not disposed to check a sentiment that did the boy’s heart so much honor; he waited on the Colonel the next morning, acquainted him with Jemmy’s wishes, and the indictment was quashed immediately after the schoolmaster’s removal from his situation.



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Our hero's personal appearance was by this time incredibly changed for the better. His countenance, naturally expressive of feeling, firmness, and intellect, now appeared to additional advantage; so did his whole person, when dressed in a decent suit of black. No man acquainted with life can be ignorant of the improvement which genteel apparel produce in the carriage, tone of thought, and principles of an individual. It gives a man confidence, self-respect, and a sense of equality with his companions; it inspires him with energy, independence, delicacy of sentiment, courtesy of manner, and elevation of language. The face becomes manly, bold, and free; the brow open, and the eye clear; there is no slinking through narrow lanes and back streets: but, on the contrary, the smoothly dressed man steps out with a determination not to spare the earth, or to walk as if he trod on eggs or razors. No; he brushes onward; is the first to accost his friends; gives a careless bow to this, a bluff nod to that, and a patronizing "how dy'e do" to a third, who is worse dressed than himself. Trust me, kind reader, that good clothes are calculated to advance a man in life nearly as well as good principles, especially in a world like this, where external appearance is taken as the exponent of what is beneath it.

Jemmy, by the advice of his friend, now waited upon the Bishop, who was much surprised at the uncommon turn of fortune which had taken place in his favor. He also expressed his willingness to help him forward, as far as lay in his power, towards the attainment of his wishes. In order to place the boy directly under suitable patronage, Mr. O'Brien suggested that the choice of the school should be left to the Bishop. This, perhaps, mattered him a little, for who is without his weaknesses? A school near the metropolis was accordingly fixed upon, to which Jemmy, now furnished with a handsome outfit, was accordingly sent. There we will leave him, reading with eagerness and assiduity, whilst we return to look after Colonel B. and his agent.

One morning after James's departure, the Colonel's servant waited upon Mr. O'Brien with a note from his master, intimating a wish to see him. He lost no time in waiting upon that gentleman, who was then preparing to visit the estate which he had so long neglected.

"I am going," said he, "to see how my agent, Yellow Sam, as they call him, and my tenants agree. It is my determination, Mr. O'Brien, to investigate the circumstances attending the removal of our protege's father. I shall, moreover, look closely into the state and feelings of my tenants in general. It is probable I shall visit many of them, and certain that I will inquire into the character of this man."



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“It is better late than never, Colonel; but still, though I am a friend to the people, yet I would recommend you to be guided by great caution, and the evidence of respectable and disinterested men only. You must not certainly entertain all the complaints you may hear, without clear proof, for I regret to say, that too many of the idle and political portion of the peasantry are apt to throw the blame of their own folly and ignorance—yes, and of their crimes, also—upon those who in no way have occasioned either their poverty or their wickedness. They are frequently apt to consider themselves oppressed, if concessions are not made, to which they, as idle and indolent men, who neglected their own business, have no fair claim. Bear this in mind, Colonel—be cool, use discrimination, take your proofs from others besides the parties concerned, or their friends, and, depend upon it, you will arrive at the truth.”

“O’Brien, you would make an excellent agent.”

“I have studied the people, sir, and know them. I have breathed the atmosphere of their prejudices, habits, manners, customs, and superstitions. I have felt them all myself, as they feel them; but I trust I have got above their influence where it is evil, for there are many fine touches of character among them, which I should not willingly part with. No, sir, I should make a bad agent, having no capacity for transacting business. I could direct and overlook, but nothing more.”

“Well, then, I shall set out to-morrow; and in the meantime, permit me to say that I am deeply sensible of your kindness in pointing out my duty as an Irish landlord, conscious that I have too long neglected it.”

“Kindness, Colonel, is the way to the Irish heart. There is but one man in Ireland who can make an Irishman ungrateful, and that is his priest. I regret that in times of political excitement, and especially during electioneering struggles, the interference of the clergy produces disastrous effects upon the moral feelings of the people. When a tenant meets the landlord whom he has deserted in the critical moment of the contest the landlord to whom he has solemnly promised his support, and who, perhaps, as a member of the legislature, has advocated his claims and his rights, and who, probably, has been kind and indulgent to him—I say, when he meets him afterwards, his shufflings, excuses, and evasions are grievous. He is driven to falsehood and dissimulation in explaining his conduct; he expresses his repentance, curses himself for his ingratitude, promises well for the future, but seldom or never can be prevailed upon to state candidly that he acted in obedience to the priest. In some instances, however, he admits this, and inveighs bitterly against his interference—but this is only whilst in the presence of his landlord. I think, Colonel, that no clergyman, set apart as he is for the concerns of a better world, should become a firebrand in the secular pursuits and turmoils of this.”



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“I wish, Mr. O’Brien, that every clergyman of your church resembled you, and acted up to your sentiments: our common country would be the better for it.”

“I endeavor to act, sir, as a man who has purely spiritual duties to perform. It is not for us to be agitated and inflamed by the political passions and animosities of the world. Our lot is differently cast, and we ought to abide by it. The priest and politician can no more agree than good and evil. I speak with respect to all churches.”

“And so do I.”

“What stay do you intend to make, Colonel?”

“I think about a month. I shall visit some of my old friends there, from whom I expect a history of the state and feelings of the country.”

“You will hear both sides of the question before you act?”

“Certainly. I have written to my agent to say that I shall look very closely into my own affairs on this occasion. I thought it fair to give him notice.”

“Well, sir, I wish you all success.”

“Farewell, Mr. O’Brien; I shall see you immediately after my return.”

The Colonel performed his journey by slow stages, until he reached “the hall of his fathers,”—for it was such, although he had not for years resided in it. It presented the wreck of a fine old mansion, situated within a crescent of stately beeches, whose moss-covered and ragged trunks gave symptoms of decay and neglect. The lawn had been once beautiful, and the demesne a noble one; but that which blights the industry of the tenant—the curse of absenteeism—had also left the marks of ruin stamped upon every object around him. The lawn was little better than a common; the pond was thick with weeds and sluggish water-plants, that almost covered its surface; and a light, elegant bridge, that spanned a river which ran before the house, was also moss-grown and dilapidated. The hedges were mixed up with briars, the gates broken, or altogether removed, the fields were rank with the ruinous luxuriance of weeds, and the grass-grown avenues spoke of solitude and desertion. The still appearance, too, of the house itself, and the absence of smoke from its time-tinged chimneys—all told a tale which constitutes one, perhaps the greatest, portion of Ireland’s misery! Even then he did not approach it with the intention of residing there during his sojourn in the country. It was not habitable, nor had it been so for years. The road by which he travelled lay near it, and he could not pass without looking upon the place where a long line of gallant ancestors had succeeded each other, lived their span, and disappeared in their turn.



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He contemplated it for some time in a kind of reverie. There, it stood, sombre and silent;—its gray walls mouldering away—its windows dark and broken;—like a man forsaken by the world, compelled to bear the storms of life without the hand of a friend to support him, though age and decay render him less capable of enduring them. For a moment fancy re-peopled it;—again the stir of life, pastime, mirth, and hospitality echoed within its walls; the train of his long departed relatives returned; the din of rude and boisterous enjoyment peculiar to the times; the cheerful tumult of the hall at dinner; the family feuds and festivities; the vanities and the passions of those who now slept in dust;—all—all came before him once more, and played their part in the vision of the moment!

As he walked on, the flitting wing of a bat struck him lightly in its flight; he awoke from the remembrances which crowded on him, and, resuming his journey, soon arrived at the inn of the nearest town, where he stopped that night. The next morning he saw his agent for a short time, but declined entering upon business. For a few days more he visited most of the neighboring gentry, from whom he received sufficient information to satisfy him that neither he himself nor his agent was popular among his tenantry. Many flying reports of the agent's dishonesty and tyranny were mentioned to him, and in every instance he took down the names of the parties, in order to ascertain the truth. M'Evoy's case had occurred more than ten years before, but he found that the remembrance of the poor man's injury was strongly and bitterly retained in the recollections of the people—a circumstance which extorted from the blunt, but somewhat sentimental soldier, a just observation:—"I think," said he, "that there are no people in the world who remember either an injury or a kindness so long as the Irish."

When the tenants were apprised of his presence among them, they experienced no particular feeling upon the subject. During all his former visits to his estate, he appeared merely the creature and puppet of his agent, who never acted the bully, nor tricked himself out in his brief authority more imperiously than he did before him. The knowledge of this damped them, and rendered any expectations of redress or justice from the landlord a matter not to be thought of.

"If he wasn't so great a man," they observed, "who thinks it below him to speak to his tenants, or hear their complaints, there 'ud be some hope. But that rip of hell, Yallow Sam, can wind him round his finger like a thread, an' does, too. There's no use in thinkin' to petition him, or to lodge a complaint against Stony Heart, for the first thing he'd do 'ud be to put it into the yallow-boy's hands, an' thin, God be merciful to thim that 'ud complain. No, no; the best way is to wait till Sam's *masther** takes him; an' who knows but that 'ud be sooner nor we think."

* The devil;—a familiar name for him when mentioned in connection with a villain.



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“They say,” another would reply, “that the Colonel is a good gentleman for all that, an’ that if he could once know the truth, he’d pitch the ‘yellow boy’ to the ‘ould boy.’”

No sooner was it known by his tenantry that the head landlord was disposed to redress their grievances, and hear their complaints, than the smothered attachment, which long neglect had nearly extinguished, now burst forth with uncommon power.

“Augh! by this an’ by that the throe blood’s in him still. The rale gentleman to dale wid, for ever! We knew he only wanted to come at the thruth, an’ thin he’d back us agin the villain that harrished us! To the divil wid skamin’ upstarts, that hasn’t the ould blood ’in thim! What are they but sconces an’ chates, every one o’ thim, barrin’ an odd one, for a wondher!”

The Colonel’s estate now presented a scene of gladness and bustle. Every person who felt in the slightest degree aggrieved, got his petition drawn up; and, but that we fear our sketch is already too long, we could gratify the reader’s curiosity by submitting a few of them. It is sufficient to say, that they came to him in every shape—in all the variety of diction that the poor English language admits of—in the schoolmaster’s best copy-hand, and choicest sesquipedalianism of pedantry—in the severer, but more Scriptural terms of the parish clerk—in the engrossing hand and legal phrase of the attorney—in the military form, evidently redolent of the shrewd old pensioner—and in the classical style of the young priest:—for each and all of the foregoing were enlisted in the cause of those who had petitions to send in “to the Colonel himself, God bless him!”

Early in the morning of the day on which the Colonel had resolved to compare the complaints of his tenantry with the character which his agent gave him of the complainants, he sent for the former, and the following dialogue took place between them.

“Good morning, Mr. Carson! Excuse me for requesting your presence to-day earlier than usual. I have taken it into my head to know something of my own tenantry, and as they have pestered me with petitions, and letters, and complaints, I am anxious to have your opinion, as you know them better than I do.”

“Before we enter on business, Colonel, allow me to inquire if you feel relieved of that bilious attack you complained of the day before yesterday? I’m of a bilious habit myself, and know something about the management of digestion!”

“A good digestion is an excellent thing, Carson; as for me, I drank too much claret with my friend B——y; and there’s the secret. I don’t like cold wines, they never agree with me.”



“Nor do I; they are not constitutional. Your father was celebrated for his wines, Colonel: I remember an anecdote told me by Captain Ferguson—by the by, do you know where Ferguson could be found, now, sir?”

“Not I. What wines do you drink, Carson?”



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“A couple of glasses of sherry, sir, at dinner; and about ten o’clock, a glass of brandy and water.”

“Carson, you are sober and prudent. Well about these cursed petitions; you must help me to dispose of them. Why, a man would think by the tenor of them, that these tenants of mine are ground to dust by a tyrant.”

“Ah! Colonel, you know little about these fellows. They would make black white. Go and take a ride, sir, return about four o’clock, and I will have everything as it ought to be.”

“I wish to heaven, Carson, I had your talents for business. Do you think my tenants attached to me?”

“Attached! sir, they are ready to cut your throat or mine, on the first convenient opportunity. You could not conceive their knavishness and dishonesty, except you happened to be an agent for a few years.

“So I have been told, and I am resolved to remove every dishonest tenant from my estate. Is there not a man, for instance, called Brady? He has sent me a long-winded petition here. What do you think of him?”

“Show me the petition, Colonel.”

“I cannot lay my hand on it just now; but you shall see it. In the mean time, what’s your opinion of the fellow?”

“Brady! Why, I know the man particularly well. He is one of my favorites. What the deuce could the fellow petition about, though? I promised the other day to renew his lease for him.”

“Oh, then, if he be a favorite of yours, his petition may go to the devil, I suppose? Is the man honest?”

“Remarkably so; and has paid his rents very punctually. He is one of our safest tenants.”

“Do you know a man called Cullen?”

“The most litigious scoundrel on the estate.”

“Indeed? Oh, then, we must look into the merits of his petition, as he is not honest. Had he been honest like Brady, Carson, I should have dismissed it.”



“Cullen, sir, is a dangerous fellow. Do you know, that rascal has charged me with keeping back his receipts, and with making I him pay double rent!—ha, ha, ha! Upon my honor, its fact.”

“The scoundrel! We shall sift him to some purpose, however.”

“If you take my advice, sir, you will send him about his business; for if it be once known that you listen to malicious petitions, my authority over such villains as Cullen is lost.”

“Well, I set him aside for the present. Here’s a long list of others, all of whom have been oppressed, forsooth. Is there a man called M’Evoy on my estate?—Dominick M’Evoy, I think.”

“M’Evoy! Why that rascal, sir, has not been your tenant for ten years? His petition, Colonel, is a key to the nature of their grievances in general.”

“I believe you, Carson—most implicitly do I believe that. Well, about that rascal?”

“Why, it is so long since, that upon my honor, I cannot exactly remember the circumstances of his misconduct. He ran away.”



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“Who is in his farm now, Carson?”

“A very decent man, sir. One Jackson, an exceedingly worthy, honest, industrious fellow. I take some credit to myself for bringing Jackson on your estate.”

“Is Jackson married? Has he a family?”

“Married! Let me see! Why—yes—I believe he is. Oh, by the by, now I think of it, he is married, and to a very respectable woman, too. Certainly, I remember—she usually accompanies him when he pays his rents.”

“Then your system must be a good one, Carson; you weed out the idle and profligate, to replace them by the honest and industrious.”

“Precisely so, sir; that is my system.”

“Yet there are agents who invert your system in some cases; who drive out the honest and industrious, and encourage the idle and profligate; who connive at them, Carson, and fill the estates they manage with their own dependents, or relatives, as the case may be. You have been always opposed to this, and I’m glad to hear it.”

“No man, Colonel B-----, filling the situation which I have the honor to hold under you, could study your interests with greater zeal and assiduity. God knows, I have had so many quarrels, and feuds, and wranglings, with these fellows, in order to squeeze money out of them to meet your difficulties, that, upon my honor, I think if it required five dozen oaths to hang me, they could be procured upon your estate. An agent, Colonel, who is faithful to the landlord, is seldom popular with the tenants.”

“I can’t exactly see that, Carson; and I have known an unpopular landlord rendered highly popular by the judicious management of an enlightened and honest agent, who took no bribes, Carson, and who neither extorted from nor ground the tenantry under him—something like a counterpart of yourself. But you may be right in general.”

“Is there anything particular, Colonel, in which I can assist you now?”

“Not now. I was anxious to hear the character of those fellows from you who know them. Come down about eleven or twelve o’clock; these petitioners will be assembled, and you may be able to assist me.”

“Colonel, remember I forewarn you, that you are plunging into a mesh of difficulties, which you will never be able to disentangle. Leave the fellows to me, sir; I know how to



deal with them. Besides, upon my honor, you are not equal to it, in point of health. You look ill. Pray allow me to take home their papers, and I shall have all clear and satisfactory before two o'clock. They know my method, sir."

"They do, Carson, they do; but I am anxious they should also know mine. Besides, it will amuse me, for I want excitement. Good day, for the present; you will be down about twelve, or one at the furthest."

"Certainly, sir. Good morning, Colonel."

The agent was too shrewd a man not to perceive that there were touches of cutting irony in some of the Colonel's expressions, which he did not like. There was a dryness, too, in the tone of his voice and words, blended with a copiousness of good humor, which, taken altogether, caused him to feel uncomfortable. He could have wished the Colonel at the devil: yet had the said Colonel never been more familiar in his life, nor, with one or two exceptions, readier to agree with almost every observation made to him.



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“Well,” thought he, “he may act as he pleases; I have feathered my nest, at all events, and disregard him.”

Colonel B-----, in fact, ascertained with extreme regret, that something was necessary to be done, to secure the good-will of his tenants; that the conduct of his agent had been marked by rapacity and bribery almost incredible. He had exacted from the tenantry in general the performance of duty-labor to such an extent, that his immense agricultural farms were managed with little expense to himself. If a poor man's corn were drop ripe, or his hay in a precarious state, or his turf undrawn, he must suffer his oats, hay, and turf, to be lost, in order to secure the crops of the agent. If he had spirit to refuse, he must expect to become a martyr to his resentment. In renewing leases his extortions were exorbitant; ten, thirty, forty, and fifty guineas he claimed as a fee for his favor, according to the ability of the party; yet this was quite distinct from the renewal fine, and went into his own pocket. When such “glove money” was not to be had, he would accept of a cow or horse, to which he usually made a point to take a fancy; or he wanted to purchase a firkin of butter at that particular time; and the poor people usually made every sacrifice to avoid his vengeance. It is due to Colonel B----- to say, that he acted in the investigation of his agent's conduct with the strictest honor and impartiality. He scrutinized every statement thoroughly, pleaded for him as temperately as he could; found, or pretended to find, extenuating motives for his most indefensible proceedings; but all would not do. The cases were so clear and evident against him, even in the opinion of the neighboring gentry, who had been for years looking upon the system of selfish misrule which he practised, that at length the generous Colonel's blood boiled with indignation in his veins at the contemplation of his villany. He accused himself bitterly for neglecting his duties as a landlord, and felt both remorse and shame for having wasted his time, health, and money, in the fashionable dissipation of London and Paris; whilst a cunning, unprincipled upstart played the vampire with his tenants, and turned his estate into a scene of oppression and poverty. Nor was this all; he had been endeavoring to bring the property more and more into his own clutches, a point which he would ultimately have gained, had not the Colonel's late succession to so large a fortune enabled him to meet his claims.

At one o'clock the tenants were all assembled about the inn door, where the Colonel had resolved to hold his little court. The agent himself soon arrived, as did several other



gentlemen, the Colonel's friends, who knew the people and could speak to their character.

The first man called was Dominick M'Evoy. No sooner was his name uttered, than a mild, poor-looking man, rather advanced in years, came forward.

"I beg your pardon, Colonel," said Carson, "here is some mistake; this man is not one of your tenants. You may remember I told you so this morning."



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"I remember it," replied the Colonel; "this is 'the rascal' you spoke of—is he not? M'Evoy," the Colonel proceeded, "you will reply to my questions with strict truth. You will state nothing but what has occurred between you and my agent; you must not even turn a circumstance in your own favor, nor against Mr. Carson, by either adding to, or taking away from it, more or less than the truth. I say this to you, and to all present; for, upon my honor, I shall dismiss the first case in which I discover a falsehood."

"Wid the help o' the Almighty, sir, I'll state nothing but the bare thruth."

"How long are you off my estate?"

"Ten years, your honor, or a little more."

"How came you to run away out of your farm?"

"Run away, your honor! Grod he knows, I didn't run away, sir. The whole counthry knows that."

"Yes, ran away! Mr. Carson, here, stated to me this morning, that you ran away. He is a gentleman of integrity, and would not state a falsehood."

"I beg your pardon, Colonel, not positively. I told you I did not exactly remember the circumstances; I said I thought so; but I may be wrong, for, indeed, my memory of facts is not good. M'Evoy, however, is a very honest man, and I have no doubt will state everything as it happened, fairly and without malice."

"An honest 'rascal,' I suppose you mean, Mr. Carson," said the Colonel, bitterly.
"Proceed, M'Evoy."

M'Evoy stated the circumstances precisely as the reader is already acquainted with them, after which the Colonel turned round to his agent and inquired what he had to say in reply.

"You cannot expect, Colonel B-----," he replied, "that with such a multiplicity of business on my hands, I could remember, after a lapse of ten years, the precise state of this particular case. Perhaps I may have some papers, a memorandum or so, at home, that may throw light upon it. At present I can only say, that the man failed in his rents, I ejected him, and put a better tenant in his place. I cannot see a crime in that."



“Plase your honor,” replied M’Evoy, “I can prove by them that’s standin’ to the fore this minute, as well as by this written affidavit, sir, that I offered him the full rint, havin’, at the same time, as God is my judge, ped part of it afore.”

“That is certainly false—an untrue and malicious statement,” said Carson. “I now remember that the cause of my resentment—yes, of my just resentment against you, was your reporting that I received your rent and withheld your receipt.”

“Then,” observed the Colonel, “There has been more than one charge of that nature brought against you? You mentioned another to me this morning if I mistake not.”

“I have made my oath, your honor, of the thruth of it; an’ here is a dacent man, sir, a Protestant, that lent me the money, an’ was present when I offered it to him. Mr. Smith, come forrid, sir, an’ spake up for the poor man, as you’re always willin’ to do.”



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"I object to his evidence," said Carson: "he is my open enemy."

"I am your enemy, Mr. Carson, or rather the enemy of your corruption and want of honesty," said Smith: "but, as you say, an open one. I scorn to say behind your back what I wouldn't say to your face. Right well you know I was present when he tendered you his rent. I lent him part of it. But why did you and your bailiffs turn him out, when his wife was on her sick bed? Allowing that he could not pay his rent, was that any reason you should do so barbarous an act as to drag a woman from her sick bed, and she at the point of death? But we know your reasons for it."

"Gentlemen," said the Colonel, "pray what character do M'Evoy and Smith here bear in the country?"

"We have known them both for years to be honest, conscientious men," said those whom he addressed: "such is their character, and in our opinion they well deserve it."

"God bless you, gentlemen!" said M'Evoy—"God bless your honors, for your kind Words! I'm sure for my own part, I hope though but a poor man now, God help me!"

"Pray, who occupies the farm at present, Mr. Carson?"

"The man I mentioned to you this morning, sir. His name is Jackson."

"And pray, Mr. Carson, who is his wife?"

"Oh, by the by, Colonel, that's a little too close! I see the gentlemen smile; but they know I must beg to decline answering that question—not that it matters much. We have all sown our wild oats in our time—myself as well as another—ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact, under other circumstances," observed the Colonel, "could never draw an inquiry from me; but as it is connected with, or probably has occasioned, a gross, unfeeling, and an unjust act of oppression towards an honest man, I therefore alluded to it, as exhibiting the motives from which you acted. She is your illegitimate daughter, sir!"

"She's one o' the baker's dozen o' them, please your honor," observed a humorous little Presbyterian, with a sarcastic face, and sharp northern accent—"for feth, sir, for my part, A think he lies one on every hill head. All count, your honor, on my fingers a roun' half-dozen, all on your estate, sir, featherin' their nests as fast as they can."

"Is this Jackson a good tenant, Mr. Carson?"

"I gave you his character this morning, Colonel B."



“Hout, Colonel!” said the Presbyterian, “deil a penny rent the man pays, at all, at all. A’ll swear a hev it from Jackson’s own lips. He made him a Bailey, sir; he suts rent free. Ask the man, sir, for his receipts, an’ a’ll warrant the truth will come out.”

“I have secured Jackson’s attendance,” said the Colonel; “let him be called in.”

The man in a few minutes entered.

“Jackson,” said the Colonel, “how long is it since you paid Mr. Carson here any rent?”

Jackson looked at Carson for his cue; but the Colonel rose up indignantly: “Fellow!” he proceeded, “if you tamper with me a single moment, you shall find Mr. Carson badly able to protect you. If you speak falsehood, be it at your peril.”



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“By Jing, sir,” said Jackson, “All say nothin’ aginst my father-in-laa, an’ A don’t care who teks it well or ull. A was just tekin’ a *gun* (* a half-tumbler of punch) with a fren’ or two— an d—me, A say, A’ll stick to my father-m-laa, for he hes stuck to me.”

“You appear to be a hardened, drunken wretch,” observed the Colonel. “Will you be civil enough to show your last receipt for rent?”

“Wull A show it? A dono whether A wull or not, nor A dono whether A hey it or not; but ef aall the receipts in Europe wur burnt, d— my blood, but A’ll stick to my father-in-laa.”

“Your father-in-law may be proud of you,” said the Colonel.

“By h—, A’ll back you en that,” said the fellow nodding his head, and looking round him confidently. “By h----, A say that, too!”

“And I am sorry to be compelled to add,” continued the Colonel, “that you may be equally proud of your father-in-law.”

“A say, right agane! D— me, bit A’ll back that too!” and he nodded confidently, and looked around the room once more. “A wull, d— my blood, bit no man can say agane it. A’m married to his daughter; an’, by the sun that shines A’ll still stan’ up for my father-in-laa.”

“Mr. Carson,” said the Colonel, “can you disprove these facts? Can you show that you did not expel M’Evoy from his farm, and put the husband of your illegitimate daughter into it? That you did not receive his rent, decline giving him a receipt, and afterwards compel him to pay twice, because he could not produce the receipt which you withheld?”

“Gentlemen,” said Carson, not directly replying to the Colonel, “there is a base conspiracy got up against me; and I can perceive, moreover, that there is evidently some unaccountable intention on the part of Colonel B. to insult my feelings and injure my character. When paltry circumstances that have occurred above ten years ago, are raked up in my teeth, I have little to say, but that it proves how very badly off the Colonel must have been for an imputation against my conduct and discretion as his agent, since he finds himself compelled to hunt so far back for a charge.”

“That is by no means the heaviest charge I have to bring against you,” replied the Colonel. “There is no lack of them; nor shall you be able to complain that they are not recent, as well as of longer standing. Your conduct in the case of poor honest M’Evoy here is black and iniquitous. He must be restored to his farm, but by other hands than yours, and that ruffian instantly expelled from it. From this moment, sir, you cease to be my agent. You have betrayed the confidence I reposed in you; you have misled me as



to the character of my tenants; you have been a deceitful, cunning, cringing, selfish and rapacious tyrant. My people you have ground to dust; my property you have lessened in value nearly one-half, and for your motives in doing this, I refer you to certain transactions and legal documents

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which passed between us. There is nothing cruel or mercenary which you did not practice, in order to enrich yourself. The whole tenor of your conduct is before me. Your profligacy is not only discovered, but already proved; and you played those villainous pranks, I suppose, because I have been mostly an absentee. Do not think, however, that you shall enjoy the fruits of your extortion? I will place the circumstances, and the proofs of the respective charges against you, in the hands of my solicitor, and, by the sacred heaven above me! you shall disgorge the fruits of your rapacity. My good people, I shall remain among you for another fortnight, during which time I intend to go through my estate, and set everything to rights as well as I can, until I may appoint a humane and feeling gentleman as my agent—such a one as will have, at least, a character to lose. I also take this opportunity of informing you, that in future I shall visit you often, will redress your grievances, should you have any to complain of, and will give such assistance to the honest and industrious among you—but to them only—as I trust may make us better pleased with each other than we have been.—Do not you go, M'Evoy, until I speak to you.”

During these observations Carson sat with a smile, or rather a sneer upon his lips. It was the sneer of a purse-proud villain confident that his wealth, no matter how ill-gotten, was still wealth, and worth its value.

“Colonel,” said he, “I have heard all you said, but you see me ’so strong in honesty,’ that I am not moved. In the course of a few weeks I shall have purchased an estate of my own, which I shall manage differently, for my fortune is made, sir. I intend also to give up my other agencies: I am rather old and must retire to enjoy a little of the *otium cum dignitate*. I wish you all goo’d-morning!”

The Colonel turned away in abhorrence, but disdained any reply.

“A say, Sam,” said the Presbyterian, “bring your son-in-laa wuth you.”

“An’ I say that, too,” exclaimed the drunken ruffian—“A say that; A do. A’m married to his daughter; an’ A say stull, that d-----my blood, bit A’ll stick to my father-in-laa! That’s the point!”—and again he nodded his head, and looked round him with a drunken swagger:—“A’ll stick to my father-in-laa! A’ll do that; feth, A wull!”*

* This dialect is local.



It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader, that the Colonel's address to Carson soon got among the assembled tenantry, and a vehement volley of groans and hisses followed the discarded agent up the street.

“Ha! bad luck to you for an ould villain. You were made to hear on the deaf side o’ your head at last! You may take the black wool out o’ your ears now, you rip! The cries an’ curses o’ the widows an’ orphans that you made and oppressed, has ris up agin you at the long run! Ha! you beggarly nager! maybe you’ll make us neglect our own work to do yours agin! Go an’ gather the dhry cow-cakes, you misert, an’ bring them home in your pocket, to throw on the dunghill!”



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“Do you remimber the day,” said others, “you met Mr. M., an’ you goin’ up the street wid a cake of it in your fists, undher your shabby skirts; an’ whin the gintlemen wint to shake hands wid you, how he discovered your maneness? Three groans for Yallow Sam, the extortioner! a short coorse to him! Your corner’s warm for you, you villain!”

“But now, boys, for the Colonel!” they exclaimed.—“Huzza for noble Colonel B----- the rale Irish gintlemen, that wouldn’t see his tenants put upon by a villain!—Huzza! Hell resave yees, shout! Huzza! Huzza! Huzza! Huz—tundher-an’-ounze, my voice is cracked! Where’s his coach?—where’s his honor’s coach? Come, boys, out wid it,—out wid it! Tattheration to yees, come! We’ll dhraw it to the divil, to hell an’ back agin, if it plases him! Success to Colonel B-----! Blood-an-turf! what’ll we do for a fight? Long life to noble Colonel B-----, the poor man’s friend!—long life to him for ever an’ a day longer! Whoo! my darlins! Huzza!” *etc.*

The warm interest which the Colonel took in M’Evoy’s behalf, was looked upon by the other tenants as a guarantee of his sincerity in all he promised. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds. They got out his carriage from the Inn-Yard, and drew it through the town, though the Colonel himself, beyond the fact of their shouting, remained quite ignorant of what was going forward.

After Carson’s departure, the Colonel’s friends, having been first asked to dine with him at the inn, also took their leave, and none remained but M’Evoy, who waited with pleasing anxiety to hear what the Colonel proposed to say—for he felt certain that it would be agreeable.

“M’Evoy,” said the Colonel, “I am truly sorry for what you have suffered through the villany of my agent; but I will give you redress, and allow you for what you have lost by the transaction. It is true, as I have been lately told by a person who pleaded your cause nobly and eloquently, that I can never repay you for what you have suffered. However, what we can, we will do. You are poor, I understand?”

“God he sees that, sir; and afflicted, too, plase your honor.”

“Afflicted? How is that?”

“I had a son, sir—a blessed boy! a darlin’ boy!—once our comfort, an’ once we thought he’d be our pride an’ our staff, but”—

The poor man’s tears here flowed fast; he took up the skirt of his “Cotha More,” or great-coat, and, after wiping his eyes, and clearing his voice, proceeded:—



“He was always, as I said, a blessed boy, and we looked up to him always, sir. He saw our poverty, your honor, an’ he felt it, sir, keen enough, indeed, God help him! How an’- iver, he took it on him to go up to Munster, sir, undher hopes of risin’ us—undher the hopes, poor child—an’ God knows, sir,—if—oh, Jemmy avourneen ma-chree!—doubt—I doubt you sunk undher what proved too many for you!—I doubt my child’s dead, sir—him that



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all our hearts wor fixed upon; and if that 'ud happen to be the case, nothin'—not even your kindness in doin' us justice, could make us happy. We would rather beg wid him, sir, nor have the best in the world widout him. His poor young heart, sir, was fixed upon the place your honor is restorin' us to; an I'm afeard his mother, sir, would break her heart if she thought he couldn't share our good fortune! And we don't know whether he's livin' or dead! That, sir, is what's afflictin' us. I had some notion of goin' to look for him; but he tould us he would never write, or let us hear from him, till he'd be either one thing or other."

"I can tell you, for your satisfaction, that your son is well, M'Evoy. Believe me, he is well—I know it."

"Well! Before God, does your honor spake truth? Well! Oh, sir, for His sake that died for us, an' for the sake of his blessed mother, can you tell me is my darlin' son alive?"

"He is living; is in excellent health; is as well dressed as I am; and has friends as rich and as capable of assisting him as myself. But how is this? What's the matter with you? You are pale! Good God! Here, waiter! Waiter! Waiter, I say!"

The Colonel rang the bell violently, and two or three waiters entered at the same moment.

"Bring a little wine and water, one of you, and let the other two remove this man to the open window. Be quick. What do you stare at?"

In a few minutes the old man recovered, and untying the narrow coarse cravat which he wore, wiped the perspiration off his pale face.

"Pray, don't be too much affected," said the Colonel. "Waiter, bring up refreshment—bring wine—be quiet and calm—you are weak, poor fellow—but we will strengthen you by-and-by."

"I am wake, sir," he replied; "for, God help us! this was a hard year upon us; and we suffered what few could bear. But he's livin', Colonel. Our darlin' is livin! Oh, Colonel, your kindness went to my heart this day afore, but that was nothin'—he's livin' an' well! On my two knees, before God, I thank you for them words! I thank you a thousand an' a thousand times more for them words, nor for what your honor did about Yallow Sam."

"Get up," said the Colonel—"get up. The proceedings of the day have produced a revulsion of feeling which has rendered you incapable of sustaining intelligence of your son. He is well, I assure you. Bring those things to this table, waiter."



“But can your honor tell me anything in particular about him, sir? What he’s doin’—or what he intends to do?”

“Yes! he is at a respectable boarding-school.”

“Boordin’-school! But isn’t boordin’-schools Protestants, sir?”

“Not at all; he is at a Catholic boarding-school, and reading hard to be a priest, which, I hope, he will soon be. He has good friends, and you may thank him for being restored to your farm.”

“Glory be to my Maker for that! Oh, sir, your tenants wor desaved in you! They thought, sir, that you wor a hard-hearted gintleman, that didn’t care whether they lived or died.”



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“I feel that I neglected them too long, M’Evoy. Now take some refreshment: eat something, and afterwards drink a few glasses of wine. Your feelings have been much excited, and you will be the better for it. Keep up your spirits. I am going to ride, and must leave you: but if you call on me to-morrow, at one o’clock, I shall have more good news for you. We must stock your farm, and enable you to enter upon it creditably.”

“Sir,” said M’Evoy, “you are a Protestant; but, as I hope to enther glory, I an’ my wife an’ childhre will pray that your bed may be made in heaven, this night; and that your honor may be led to see the truth an’ the right coorse.”

The Colonel then left him; and the simple man, on looking at the cold meat, bread, and wine before him, raised his hands and eyes towards heaven, to thank God for his goodness, and to invoke a blessing upon his noble and munificent benefactor.

But how shall we describe the feelings of his family, when, after returning home, he related the occurrences of that day. The severe and pressing exigencies under which they labored had prevented his sons from attending the investigation that was to take place in town. Their expectations, however, were raised, and they looked out with intense anxiety for the return of their father.

At length he was seen coming slowly up the hill; the spades were thrown aside, and the whole family assembled to hear “what was done.”

The father entered in silence, sat down, and after wiping his brow and laying down his hat, placing his staff across it upon the floor, he drew his breath deeply.

“Dominick,” said the wife, “what news? What was done?”

“Vara,” replied Dominick, “do you remimber the day—fair and handsome you wor then—when I first kissed your lips, as my own darlin’ wife?”

“Ah, avourneen, Dominick, don’t spake of them times. The happiness we had then is long gone, acushla, in one sense.”

“It’s before me like yestherday, Vara—the delight that went through my heart, jist as clear as yestherday, or the blessed sun that’s shinin’ through the broken windy on the floor there. I remimber, Vara, saying to you that day—I don’t know whether you remimber it or not—but I remimber sayin’ to you, that if I lived a thousand years, I could never feel sich happiness as I did when I first pressed you to my heart as my own wife.”

“Well, but we want to hear what happened, Dominick, achora.”

“Do you remimber the words, Vara?”



“Och! I do, avourneen. Didn’t they go into my heart at the time, an’ how could I forget them? But I can’t bear, somehow, to look back at what we wor then, bekase I feel my heart brakin’, acushla!”

“Well, Vara, look at me. Amn’t I a poor wasted crathur now, in comparishment to what I was thin?”

“God he sees the change that’s in you, darlin’! But sure ’twasn’t your fau’t, or mine either, Dominick, avilish!”



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“Well, Vara, you see me now—I’m happpier—before God, I’m happier—happier, a thousand degrees than I was thin! Come to my arms, asthore machree—my heart s breakin’—but it’s wid happiness—don’t be frightened—it’s wid joy I’m sheddin’ these tears—it’s wid happiness an’ delight In’ cryin’! Jemmy is livin’, an’ well, childhre—he’s livin’ an’ well, Vara—the star of our hearts is livin’, an’ well, an’ happy! Kneel down, childhre—kneel down! Bend before the great God, an’ thank him for his kindness to your blessed brother—to our blessed son. Bless the Colonel, childhre; bless him whin you’re down, Protestant an’ all, as he is. Oh, bless him as if you prayed for myself, or for Jemmy, that’s far away from us!”

He paused for a few minutes, bent his head upon his hands as he knelt in supplication at the chair, then resumed his seat, as did the whole family, deeply affected.

“Now, childhre,” said he, “I’ll tell yez all; but don’t any of you be so poor a crathur as I was to-day. Bear it mild an’ asy, Vara, acushla, for I know it will take a start out of you. Sure we’re to go back to our own ould farm! Ay, an’ what’a more—oh, God of heaven, bless him!—what’s more, the Colonel is to stock it for us, an’ to help us; an’ what is more, Yallow Sam is out! out!!”

“Out!” they exclaimed: “Jemmy well, an’ Yallow Sam out! Oh, father, surely”—

“Now behave, I say. Ay, and never to come in again! But who do you think got him out?”

“Who?—why God he knows. Who could get him out?”

“Our son, Vara—our son, childhre: Jemmy got him out, an’ got ourselves back to our farm! I had it partly from the noble Colonel’s own lips, an’ the remainder from Mr. Moutray, that I met on my way home. But there’s more to come:—sure Jemmy has friends aquil to the Colonel himself: an’ sure he’s at a Catholic boordin’-school, among gentlemen’s childhre, an’ in a short time he’ll be a priest in full ordhers.”

We here draw a veil over the delight of the family. Questions upon questions, replies upon replies, sifting and cross-examinations, followed in rapid succession, until all was known that the worthy man had to communicate.

Another simple scene followed, which, as an Irishman, I write with sorrow. When the joy of the family had somewhat subsided, the father, putting his hand in his coat-pocket, pulled out several large slices of mutton.

“Along wid all, childhre,” said he, “the Colonel ordhered me my dinner. I ate plinty myself, an’ slipped these slices in my pocket for you: but the devil a one o’ me knows what kind o’ mate it is. An’ I got wine, too! Oh!—Well, they may talk, but wine is the drink! Bring me the ould knife, till I make a fair divide of it among ye. Musha, what kind



o' mate can it be, for myself doesn't remimber atin' any sort, barrin' bacon an' a bit o' slink-veal of an odd time?"

They all ate it with an experimental air of sagacity that was rather amusing. None, however, had ever tasted mutton before, and consequently the name of the meat remained, on that occasion, a profound secret to M'Evoy and his family.* It is true, they supposed it to be mutton; but not one of them could pronounce it to be such, from any positive knowledge of its peculiar flavor.



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* There are hundreds of thousands—yes, millions—of the poorer classes in Ireland, who have never tasted mutton!

“Well,” said Dominick, “it’s no matter what the name of it is, in regard that it’s good mate, any way, for them that has enough of it.”

With a fervent heart and streaming eyes did this virtuous family offer up their grateful prayers to that God whose laws they had not knowingly violated, and to whose providence they owed so much. Nor was their benefactor forgotten. The strength and energy of the Irish language, being that in which the peasantry usually pray, were well adapted to express the depth of their gratitude towards a man who had, as they said, “humbled himself to look into their wants, as if he was like one of themselves!”

For upwards of ten years they had not gone to bed free from the heaviness of care, or the wasting grasp of poverty. Now their hearth was once more surrounded by peace and contentment; their burthens were removed, their pulses beat freely, and the language of happiness again was heard under their humble roof. Even sleep could not repress the vivacity of their enjoyments: they dreamt of their brother—for in the Irish heart domestic affections hold the first place;—they dreamt of the farm to which those affections had so long yearned. They trod it again as its legitimate possessors. Its fields were brighter, its corn waved with softer murmurs to the breeze, its harvests were richer, and the song of their harvest home more cheerful than before. Their delight was tumultuous, but intense; and when they arose in the morning to a sober certainty of waking bliss, they again knelt in worship to God with exulting hearts, and again offered up their sincere prayers in behalf of the just man who had asserted their rights against the oppressor.

Colonel B. was a man who, without having been aware of it, possessed an excellent capacity for business. The neglect of his property resulted not from want of feeling, but merely from want of consideration. There had, moreover, been no precedent for him to follow. He had seen no Irishman of rank ever bestow a moment’s attention on his tenantry. They had been, for the most part, absentees like himself, and felt satisfied if they succeeded in receiving their half-yearly remittance in due course, without ever reflecting for a moment upon the situation of those from whom it was drawn.

Nay, what was more—he had not seen even the resident gentry enter into the state and circumstances of those who lived upon their property. It was a mere accident that determined him to become acquainted with his tenants; but no sooner had he seen his duty, and come to the resolution of performing it, than the decision of his character became apparent. It is true, that, within the last few years, the Irish landlords have advanced in knowledge. Many of them have introduced more improved systems of agriculture,

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and instructed their tenants in the best methods of applying them; but during the time of which we write, an Irish landlord only saw his tenants when canvassing them for their votes, and instructed them in dishonesty and perjury, not reflecting that he was then teaching them to practise the arts of dissimulation and fraud against himself. This was the late system: let us hope that it will be superseded by a better one; and that the landlord will think it a duty, but neither a trouble nor a condescension, to look into his own affairs, and keep an eye upon the morals and habits of his tenantry.

The Colonel, as he had said, remained more than a fortnight upon his estate; and, as he often declared since, the recollections arising from the good which he performed during that brief period, rendered it the portion of his past life upon which he could look with most satisfaction. He did not leave the country till he saw M'Evoy and his family restored to their farm, and once more independent;—until he had redressed every well-founded complaint, secured the affections of those who had before detested him, and diffused peace and comfort among every family upon his estate. From thenceforth he watched the interests of his tenants, and soon found that in promoting their welfare, and instructing them in their duties, he was more his own benefactor than theirs. Before many years had elapsed, his property was wonderfully improved; he himself was called the “Lucky Landlord,” “bekase,” said the people, “ever since he spoke to, an’ advised his tenants, we find that it’s lucky to live undher him. The people has heart to work wid a gintleman that won’t grind thim; an’ so sign’s on it, every one thrives upon his land: an’ dang my bones, but I believe a rotten stick ’ud grow on it, set in case it was thried.”

In sooth, his popularity became proverbial; but it is probable, that not even his justice and humanity contributed so much to this, as the vigor with which he prosecuted his suit against “Yellow Sam,” whom he compelled literally to “disgorge” the fruits of his heartless extortion. This worthy agent died soon after his disgrace, without any legitimate issue; and his property, which amounted to about fifty thousand pounds, is now inherited by a gentleman of the strictest honor and integrity. To this day his memory is detested by the people, who, with that bitterness by which they stigmatized a villain, have erected him into a standard of dishonesty. If a man become remarkable for want of principle, they usually say—“he’s as great a rogue as Yallow Sam;” or, “he is the greatest sconce that ever was in the country, barrin’ Yallow Sam.”

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We now dismiss him, and request our readers, at the same time, not to suppose that we have held him up as a portrait of Irish agents in general. On the contrary, we believe that they constitute a most respectable class of men, who have certainly very difficult duties to perform. The Irish landlords, we are happy to say, taught by experience, have, for the most part, both seen and felt the necessity of appointing gentlemen of property to situations so very important, and which require so much patience, consideration, and humanity, in those who fill them. We trust they will persevere in this plan; * but we can assure them, that all the virtues of the best agent can never compensate, in the opinion of the people, for neglect in the "Head Landlord." One visit, or act, even of nominal kindness, for him, will at any time produce more attachment and gratitude among them, than a whole life spent in good offices by an agent. Like Sterne's French Beggar, they would prefer a pinch of snuff from the one, to a guinea from the other. The agent only renders them a favor, but the Head Landlord does them an honor.

* This tale has been written nearly twelve years, but the author deeply regrets that the Irish landlords have disintitiled themselves to the favorable notice taken of them in the text.

Colonel B., immediately after his return home, sent for Mr. O'Brien, who waited on him with a greater degree of curiosity than perhaps he had ever felt before. The Colonel smiled as he extended his hand to him.

"Mr. O'Brien," said he, "I knew you would feel anxious to hear the result of my visit to the estate which this man with the nickname managed for me."

"Managed, sir? Did you say managed?"

"I spoke in the past time, O'Brien: he is out."

"Then your protege's story was correct, sir?"

"True to a title. O'Brien, there is something extraordinary in that boy; otherwise, how could it happen that a sickly, miserable-looking creature, absolutely in tatters, could have impressed us both so strongly with a sense of the injustice done ten years ago to his father? It is, indeed, remarkable."

"The boy, Colonel, deeply felt that act of injustice, and the expression of it came home to the heart."

"I have restored his father, however. The poor man and his family are once more happy. I have stocked their old farm for them; in fact, they now enjoy comfort and independence."



“I am glad, sir, that you have done them justice. That act, alone, will go far to redeem your character from the odium which the conduct of your agent was calculated to throw upon it.”



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“There is not probably in Ireland a landlord so popular as I am this moment—at least among my tenants on that property. Restoring M’Evoy, however, is but a small part of what I have done. Carson’s pranks were incredible. He was a rack-renter of the first water. A person named Brady had paid him twenty-five guineas as a *douceur*—in other words, as a bribe—for renewing a lease for him; yet, after having received the money, he kept the poor man dangling after him, and at length told him that he was offered a larger sum by another. In some cases he kept back the receipts, and made the poor people pay twice, which was still more iniquitous. Then, sir, he would not take bank notes in payment. No; he was so wonderfully conscientious, and so zealously punctual in fulfilling my wishes, as he told them on the subject, that nothing would pass in payment but gold. This gold, sir, they were compelled to receive from himself, at a most oppressive premium; so that he actually fleeced them under my name, in every conceivable manner and form of villainy. He is a usurer, too; and, I am told, worth forty or fifty thousand pounds: but, thank heaven! he is no longer an agent of mine.”

“It gives me sincere pleasure, sir, that you have at length got correct habits of thinking upon your duties as an Irish landlord; for believe me, Colonel B., as a subject involving a great portion of national happiness or national misery, it is entitled to the deepest and most serious consideration, not only of the class to which you belong, but of the legislature. Something should be done, sir, to improve the condition of the poorer classes. A rich country and poor inhabitants is an anomaly; and whatever is done should be prompt and effectual. If the Irish landlords looked directly into the state of their tenantry, and set themselves vigorously to the task of bettering their circumstances, they would, I am certain, establish the tranquillity and happiness of the country at large. The great secret, Colonel, of the dissensions that prevail among us is the poverty of the people. They are poor, and therefore the more easily wrought up to outrage; they are poor, and think that any change must be for the better; they are not only poor, but imaginative, and the fittest recipients for those vague speculations by which they are deluded. Let their condition be improved, and the most fertile source of popular tumult and crime is closed. Let them be taught how to labor: let them not be bowed to the earth by rents so far above the real value of their lands. The pernicious maxims which float among them must be refuted—not by theory, but by practical lessons performed before their eyes for their own advantage. Let them be taught how to discriminate between their real interests and their prejudices; and none can teach them all this so effectually as their landlords, if they could be roused from their apathy, and induced to undertake the task. Who ever saw a poor nation without great crimes?”



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“Very true, O’Brien; quite true. I am resolved to inspect personally the condition of those who reside on my other estates. But now about our protege? How is he doing?”

“Extremely well. I have had a letter from him a few days ago, in which he alludes to the interest you have taken in himself and his family, with a depth of feeling truly affecting.”

“When you write to him, let him know that I have placed his father in his old farm; and that Carson is out. Say I am sure he will conduct himself properly, in which case I charge myself with his expenses until he shall have accomplished his purpose. After that he may work his own way through life, and I have no doubt but he will do it well and honorably.”

Colonel B-----’s pledge on this occasion was nobly redeemed. Our humble hero pursued his studies with zeal and success. In due time he entered Maynooth, where he distinguished himself not simply for smartness as a student, but as a young man possessed of a mind far above the common order. During all this time nothing occurred worthy of particular remark, except that, in fulfilment of his former vow, he never wrote to any of his friends; for the reader should have been told, that this was originally comprehended in the determination he had formed. He received ordination at the hands of his friend the Bishop, whom we have already introduced to the reader, and on the same day he was appointed by that gentleman to a curacy in his own parish. The Colonel, whose regard for him never cooled, presented him with fifty pounds, together with a horse, saddle, and bridle; so that he found himself in a capacity to enter upon his duties in a decent and becoming manner. Another circumstance that added considerably to his satisfaction, was the appointment of Mr. O’Brien to a parish adjoining that of the Bishop. James’s afflictions had been the means of bringing the merits of that excellent man before his spiritual superior, who became much attached to him, and availed himself of the earliest opportunity of rewarding his unobtrusive piety and benevolence.

No sooner was his ordination completed, than the long suppressed yearnings after his home and kindred came upon his spirit with a power that could not be restrained. He took leave of his friends with a beating heart, and set out on a delightful summer morning to revisit all that had been, notwithstanding his long absence and severe trials, so strongly wrought into his memory and affections. Our readers may, therefore, suppose him on his journey home, and permit, themselves to be led in imagination to the house of his former friend, Lanigan, where we must lay the scene for the present.



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Lanigan's residence has the same comfortable and warm appearance which always distinguishes the habitation of the independent and virtuous man. What, however, can the stir, and bustle, and agitation which prevail in it mean? The daughters run out to a little mound, a natural terrace, beside the house, and look anxiously towards the road; then return, and almost immediately appear again, with the same intense anxiety to catch a glimpse of some one whom they expect. They look keenly; but why is it that their disappointment appears to be attended with such dismay? They go into their father's house once more, wringing their hands, and betraying all the symptoms of affliction. Here is their mother, too, coming to peer into the distance, she is rocking with that motion peculiar to Irishwomen when suffering distress. She places her open hand upon her brows that she may collect her sight to a particular spot; she is blinded by her tears; breaks out into a low wail, and returns with something like the darkness of despair on her countenance. She goes into the house, passes through the kitchen, and enters into a bed-room; seats herself on a chair beside the bed, and renews her low but' bitter wail of sorrow. Her husband is lying in that state which the peasantry know usually precedes the agonies of death.

"For the sake of the livin' God," said he, on seeing her, "is there any sign o' them?"

"Not yet, a *suillish*; (* My light) but they will soon—they must soon, asthore, be here, an' thin your mind will be asy."

"Oh, Alley, Alley, if you could know what I suffer for 'fraid I'd die widout the priest you'd pity me!"

"I do pity you, asthore: but don't be cast down, for I have my trust in God that he won't desart you in your last hour. You did what you could, my heart's pride; you bent before him night an' mornin', and sure the poor neighbor never wint from your door widout lavin' his blessin' behind him."

The dying man raised his hands feebly from the bed-clothes; "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I thought I did a great dale, Alley: but now—but now—it appears nothin' to what I ought to a' done when I could. Still, avour-neen, my life's not unpleasant when I look back at it; for I can't remimber that I ever purposely offinded a livin' mortal. All I want to satisfy me is the priest."

"No, avourneen, you did not; for it wasn't in you to offind a child."

"Alley, you'll pardon me an' forgive me acushla, if ever—if ever I did what was displasin' to you! An' call in the childhre, till I see them about me—I want to have their forgiveness, too. I know I'll have it—for they wor good childhre, an' ever loved me."



The daughters now entered the room, exclaiming—“*Ahir dheelish* (beloved father), Pether is comin’ by himself, but no priest! Blessed Queen of Heaven, what will we do! Oh! father darlin’, are you to die widout the Holy Ointment?”

The sick man clasped his hands, looked towards heaven and groaned aloud.



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“Oh, it’s hard, this,” said he. “It’s hard upon me! Yet I won’t be cast down. I’ll trust in my good God; I’ll trust in his blessed name!”

His wife, on hearing that her son was returned without the priest, sat, with her face shrouded by her apron, weeping in grief that none but they who know the dependence which those belonging to her church place in its last rites can comprehend. The children appeared almost distracted; their grief had more of that stunning character which attends unexpected calamity, than of sorrow for one who is gradually drawn from life.

At length the messenger entered the room, and almost choked with tears, stated that both priests were absent that day at Conference, and would not return till late.

The hitherto moderated grief of the wife arose to a pitch much wilder than the death of her husband could, under ordinary circumstances, occasion. To die without absolution—to pass away into eternity “unanointed, unaneled”—without being purified from the inherent stains of humanity—was to her a much deeper affliction than her final separation from him. She cried in tones of the most piercing despair, and clapped her hands, as they do who weep over the dead. Had he died in the calm confidence of having received the Viaticum, or Sacrament before death, his decease would have had nothing remarkably calamitous in it, beyond usual occurrences of a similar nature. Now the grief was intensely bitter in consequence of his expected departure without the priest. His sons and daughters felt it as forcibly as his wife; their lamentations were full of the strongest and sharpest agony.

For nearly three hours did they remain in this situation; poor Lanigan sinking by degrees into that collapsed state from which there is no possibility of rallying. He was merely able to speak; and recognize his family; but every moment advanced him, with awful certainty, nearer and nearer to his end..

A great number of the neighbors were now assembled, all participating in the awful feeling which predominated, and anxious to compensate by their prayers for the absence of that confidence derived by Roman Catholics during the approach of death, from the spiritual aid of the priest. They were all at prayer; the sick-room and kitchen were crowded with his friends and acquaintances, many of whom knelt out before the door, and joined with loud voices in the Rosary which was offered up in his behalf.

In this crisis were they, when a horseman, dressed in black, approached the house. Every head was instantly turned round, with a hope that it might be the parish priest or his curate; but, alas! they were doomed to experience a fresh disappointment. The stranger, though clerical enough in his appearance, presented a countenance with which none of them was acquainted. On glancing at the group who knelt around the door, he appeared to understand the melancholy cause which brought them together.



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“How is this?” he exclaimed. “Is there any one here sick or dying?”

“Poor Mither Lanigan, sir, is jist departing glory be to God! An’ what is terrible all out upon himself and family, he’s dyin’ widout the priest. They’re both at Conwhirence, sir, and can’t come—Mr. Dogherty an’ his curate.”

“Make way!” said the stranger, throwing himself off his horse, and passing quickly through the people. “Show me to the sick man’s room—be quick, my friends—I am a Catholic clergyman.”

In a moment a passage was cleared, and the stranger found himself beside the bed of death. Grief in the room was loud and bitter; but his presence stilled it despite of what they felt.

“My dear friends,” said he, “you know there should be silence in the apartment of a dying man. For shame!—for shame! Cease this clamor, it will but distract him for whom you weep, and prevent him from composing his mind for the great trial that is before him.”

“Sir,” said Lanigan’s wife, seizing his hand in both hers, and looking distractedly in his face, “are you a priest? For heaven’s sake tell us?”

“I am,” he replied; “leave the room every one of you. I hope your husband is not speechless?”

“Sweet Queen of Heaven, not yet, may her name be praised! but near it, your Reverence—widin little or no time of it.”

Whilst they spoke, he was engaged in putting the stole about his neck, after which he cleared the room, and commenced hearing Lanigan’s confession.

The appearance of a priest, and the consolation it produced, rallied the powers of life in the benevolent farmer. He became more collected; made a clear and satisfactory confession; received the sacrament of Extreme Unction; and felt himself able to speak with tolerable distinctness and precision. The effects of all this were astonishing. A placid serenity, full of hope and confidence, beamed from the pale and worn features of him who was but a few minutes before in a state of terror altogether indescribable. When his wife and family, after having been called in, observed this change, they immediately participated in his tranquillity. Death had been deprived of its sting, and grief of its bitterness; their sorrow was still deep, but it was not darkened by the dread of future misery. They felt for him as a beloved father, a kind husband, and a clear friend, who had lived a virtuous life, feared God, and was now about to pass into happiness.



When the rites of the church were administered, and the family again assembled round the bed, the priest sat down in a position which enabled him to see the features of this good man more distinctly.

“I would be glad,” said Lanigan, “to know who it is that God in his goodness has sent to smooth my bed in death, if it ‘ud be plasin’, sir, to you to tell me?”

“Do you remember,” replied the priest, “a young lad whom you met some years ago on his way to Munster, as a poor scholar! You and your family were particularly kind to him; so kind that he has never since forgotten your affectionate hospitality.”



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"We do, your Reverence, we do. A mild, gentle crathur he was, poor boy. I hope God prospered him."

"You see him now before you," said the priest. "I am that boy, and I thank God that I can testify, however slightly, my deep sense of the virtues which you exercised towards me; although I regret that the occasion is one of such affliction."

The farmer raised his eyes and feeble hands towards heaven. "Praise an' glory to your name, good God!" he exclaimed. "Praise an' glory to your holy name! Now I know that I'm not forgotten, when you brought back the little kindness I did that boy for your sake, wid so many blessins to me in the hour of my affliction an' sufferin'! Childher remimber this, now that I'm goin' to lave yez for ever! Remimber always to help the stranger, an' thim that's poor an' in sorrow. If you do, God won't forget it to you; but will bring it back to yez when you stand in need of it, as he done to me this day. You see, childhre dear, how small thrifles o' that kind depend on one another. If I hadn't thought of helpin' his Reverence here when he was young and away from his own, he wouldn't think of callin' upon us this day as he was passin'. You see the hand of God is in it, childhre: which it is, indeed, in every thing that passes about us, if we could only see it as we ought to do. Thin, but I'd like to look upon your face, sir, if it's plasin' to you? A little more to the light, sir. There, I now see you. Ay, indeed, it's changed for the bettther it is—: the same mild, clear countenance, but not sorrowful, as when I seen it last. Suffer me to put my hand on your head, sir; I'd like to bless you before I die, for I can't forget what you undertook to do for your parents."

The priest sat near him; but finding he was scarcely able to raise his hand to his head, he knelt down, and the farmer, before he communicated the blessing inquired—

"Musha, sir, may I ax, wor you able to do anything to help your family as you expected?"

"God," said the priest, "made me the instrument of raising them from their poverty; they are now comfortable and happy."

"Ay! Well I knew at the time, an' I said it, that a blessin' would attind your endayvors. An' now resave my blessin'. May you never depart from the right way! May the blessin' of God rest upon you for ever—Amin! Childhre, I'm gettin' wake; come near me, till, till I bless you, too, for the last time! They were good childhre, sir—they were ever an' always good to me, an' to their poor mother, your Reverence; an'—God forgive me if it's a sin!—but I feel a great dale o' my heart an' my love fixed upon them. But sure I'm their father, an' God, I hope, will look over it! Now, darlins, afore I bless yez, I ax your forgiveness if ever I was harsher to yez than I ought!"

The children with a simultaneous movement encircled his bed, and could not reply for some minutes.



“Never, father darlin’! Oh, never did you offend us! Don’t speak in that way, or you’ll break our hearts; but forgive us, father ashore! Oh, forgive an’ bless us, an’ don’t remember against us, our folly an’ disobedience, for it’s only now that we see we warn’t towards you as we ought to be. Forgive us an’ pardon us!”



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He then made them all kneel around his bed, and with solemn words, and an impressive manner, placed his hand upon their heads, and blessed them with a virtuous father's last blessing.

He then called for his wife, and the scene became not only more touching, but more elevated. There was an exultation in her manner, and an expression of vivid hope in her eye, arising from the fact of her husband having received, and been soothed by the rites of her church, that gave evident proof of the unparalleled attachment borne by persons of her class to the Catholic religion. The arrival of our hero had been so unexpected, and the terrors of the tender wife for her husband's soul so great, that the administration of the sacrament almost superseded from her heart every other sensation than that of devotional triumph. Even now, in the midst of her tears, that triumph kindled in her eye with a light that shone in melancholy beauty upon the bed of death. In proportion, however, as the parting scene—which was to be their last—began to work with greater power upon her sorrow, so did this expression gradually fade away. Grief for his loss resumed its dominion over her heart so strongly, that their last parting was afflicting even to look upon.

When it was over, Lanigan once more addressed the priest:—

“Now, sir,” he observed, but with great difficulty, “let me have your blessin' an' your prayers; an' along wid that, your Reverence, if you remimber a request I once made to you”—

“I remember it well,” replied the priest; “you allude to the masses which you-wished I me to say for you, should I ever receive Orders. Make your mind easy on that point. I not only shall offer up mass for the repose of your soul, but I can assure you that I have mentioned you by name in every mass which I celebrated since my ordination.”

He then proceeded to direct the mind of his dying benefactor to such subjects as were best calculated to comfort and strengthen him.

About day-break the next morning, this man of many virtues, after struggling rather severely for two hours preceding his death, passed into eternity, there to enjoy the recompense of a well-spent life.

When he was dead, the priest, who never left him during the night, approached the bed, and after surveying his benevolent features, now composed in the stillness of death, exclaimed—

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them!”



Having uttered the words aloud, he sat down beside the bed, buried his face in his handkerchief, and wept.

He was now only a short day's journey from home, and as his presence, he knew, would be rather a restraint upon a family so much in affliction, he bade them farewell, and proceeded on his way. He travelled slowly, and, as every well-known hill or lake appeared to him, his heart beat quickly, his memory gave up its early stores, and his affections prepared themselves for the trial that was before them.



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"It is better for me not to arrive," thought he, "until the family shall have returned from their daily labor, and are collected about the hearth."

In the meantime, many an impression of profound and fervid piety came over him, when he reflected upon the incontrovertible proofs of providential protection and interference which had been, during his absence from home, under his struggles, and, in his good fortune, so clearly laid before him. "Deep," he exclaimed, "is the gratitude I owe to God for this; may I never forget to acknowledge it!"

It was now about seven o'clock; the evening was calm, and the sun shone with that clear amber light which gives warmth, and the power of exciting tenderness to natural scenery. He had already gained the ascent which commanded a view of the rich sweep of country that reposed below. There it lay—his native home—his native parish—bathed in the light and glory of the hour. Its fields were green—its rivers shining like loosened silver; its meadows already studded with hay-cocks, its green pastures covered with sheep, and its unruffled lakes reflecting the hills under which they lay. Here and there a gentleman's residence rose among the distant trees, and well did he recognize the church spire that cut into the western sky on his right. It is true, nothing of the grandeur and magnificence of nature was there; everything was simple in its beauty. The quiet charm, the serene light, the air of happiness and peace that reposed upon all he saw, stirred up a thousand tender feelings in a heart whose gentle character resembled that of the prospect which it felt so exquisitely. The smoke of a few farm-houses and cottages rose in blue, graceful columns to the air, giving just that appearance of life which was necessary; and a figure or two, with lengthened shadows, moved across the fields and meadows a little below where he stood.

But our readers need not to be told, that there was one spot which, beyond all others, riveted his attention. On that spot his eager eye rested long and intensely. The spell of its remembrance had clung to his early heart: he had never seen it in his dreams without weeping; and often had the agitation of his imaginary sorrow awoken him with his eye-lashes steeped in tears. He looked down on it steadily. At length he was moved with a strong sensation like grief: he sobbed twice or thrice, and the tears rolled in showers from his eyes. His gathering affections were relieved by this: he felt lighter, and in the same slow manner rode onward to his father's house.

To this there were two modes of access: one by a paved bridle-way, or breen, that ran up directly before the door—the other by a green lane, that diverged from the breen about a furlong below the house. He took the latter, certain that the family could not notice his approach, nor hear the noise of his horse's footsteps, until he could arrive at the very threshold.. On dismounting, he felt that he could scarcely walk. He approached the door, however, as steadily as he could. He entered—and the family, who had just finished their supper, rose up, as a mark of their respect to the stranger.



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"Is this," he inquired, "the house in which Dominick M'Evoy lives?"

"That's my name, sir," replied Dominick. "The family, I trust, are—all—well? I have been desired—but—no—no—I cannot—I cannot—father!—mother!"

"It's him!" shrieked the mother—"Its himself!—Jemmy"

"Jemmy!—Jemmy!" shouted the father, with a cry of joy which might be heard far beyond the house.

"Jemmy!—our poor Jemmy!—Jemmy!!" exclaimed his brothers and sisters.

"Asy, childhre," said the father—"asy; let the mother to him—let her to him. Who has the right that she has? Vara, asthore—Vara, think of yourself. God of heaven! what is comin' over her?—Her brain's turned!"

"Father, don't remove her," said the son. "Leave her arms where they are: it's long since they encircled my neck before. Often—often would I have given the wealth of the universe to be encircled in my blessed and beloved mother's arms! Yes, yes!—Weep, my father—weep, each of you. You see those tears:—consider them as a proof that I have never forgotten you! Beloved mother! recollect yourself: she knows me not—her eyes wander!—I fear the shock has been too much for her. Place a chair at the door, and I will bring her to the air."

After considerable effort, the mother's faculties were restored so far as to be merely conscious that our hero was her son. She had not yet shed a tear, but now she surveyed his countenance, smiled and named him, placed her hands upon him, and examined his dress with a singular blending of conflicting emotions, but still without being thoroughly collected.

"I will speak to her," said Jemmy, "in Irish, it will go directly to her heart:—*Mhair, avourneen, tha ma, laht, anish!*—Mother, my darling, I am with you at last."

"*Shamus, aroon, vick machree, wuil thu lhum? wuil thu—wuil thu lhum?*—Jemmy, my beloved, son of my heart, are you with me?—are you—are you with me?"

"*Ish maheen a tha in, a vair dheelish machree*—It is I who am with you, beloved mother of my heart!"

She smiled again—but only for a moment. She looked at him, laid his head upon her bosom, bedewed his face with her tears, and muttered out, in a kind of sweet, musical cadence, the Irish cry of joy.

We are incapable of describing the scene further. Our readers must be contented to know, that the delight and happiness of our hero's whole family were complete. Their



son, after many years of toil and struggle, had at length succeeded, by a virtuous course of action, in raising them from poverty to comfort, and in effecting his own object, which was, to become a member of the Catholic priesthood. During all his trials he never failed to rely on God; and it is seldom that those who rely upon Him, when striving to attain a laudable purpose, are ever ultimately disappointed.

We regret to inform our readers, that the poor scholar is dead! He did not, in fact, long survive the accomplishment of his wishes. But as we had the particulars of his story from his nearest friends, we thought his virtues of too exalted a nature to pass into oblivion without some record, however humble. He died as he had lived—the friend of God and of man.